

**‘She helps me to cope’: An exploration of
the experiences of women at the Sacro
Women’s Mentoring Service**

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Declaration

I declare that none of the work contained within this thesis has been submitted for any other degree at any other university. The contents of this thesis have been composed by Heather Tolland.

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Abstract

Mentoring has become increasingly popular in recent years in the criminal justice system, and has been recommended by the Scottish Government as a service that can address the specific 'needs' of women who offend. Despite the popularity of mentoring, there has been limited evidence to suggest that it reduces reoffending of women, or facilitates significant changes in their lives. In addition, there has been a lack of clarity around the definition of mentoring, including role definition, the extent of intensive support offered and the key aims of the service. This thesis (in collaboration with Sacro and the University of Stirling), explores the experiences of women who have accessed the Sacro Women's Mentoring Service and accounts from mentors and staff to establish what the key aims and processes of mentoring are, alongside a critique of whether this offers an approach that can address key issues related to the marginalisation of these women. Findings from the data revealed that mentoring consisted of practical support, helping women to respond to difficulties related to poverty and their disadvantaged circumstances generally. The most common outcomes for women were: engagement with agencies; increases in confidence and self-esteem and improvements in emotional well-being. The rhetoric of mentoring offered by mentors and staff suggested that mentoring was based on an individualistic approach that contained responsibilising strategies, aimed at helping women to make improved choices and become responsible citizens. In practice, however, mentors were helping women to resolve issues related to the welfare system and other services outwith the criminal justice system. Many mentors and staff viewed mentoring as role modelling, however, women who accessed the service were more likely to view their mentor as a friend and 'someone to talk to' suggesting that the relationship was not an opportunity for women to model the behaviours of their mentor, but as emotional support and a release from their social isolation. This disconnect was also reflected in 'imaginary penalties' which were observed, such as staff completing paperwork they did not view as relevant to the service they delivered or staff being sent on training that they could not apply to the work they delivered on a day to day basis. This may be a result of the increasing marketisation of mentoring within the criminal justice system. Those services labelled as 'mentoring' may be more likely to gain funding as it is a service that is currently favoured by statutory funders in Scotland. If positive outcomes of mentoring are viewed by policy makers to be the result of an individualistic approach, and not mentors addressing problems outwith the

criminal justice system, as best as they can, then this takes responsibility away from the state to make changes to policy. It also places unrealistic expectations on mentors to make significant changes to the lives of women in an environment of continuing funding cuts to welfare and services.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

This thesis provides an in-depth exploration of 'mentoring' for women in the criminal justice system in Scotland. The study is largely qualitative and based on interviews with women who used the Sacro¹ mentoring service in Scotland, and interviews with mentors and other relevant staff. This chapter defines the background, context and aims of the study. In addition, there is an overview of the thesis layout.

Background and context

As mentoring has been recommended as a service that aims to contribute to a reduction in the female prison population in Scotland (Angiolini et al. 2012) it is necessary to review the characteristics of this population. Women commit less crime and less serious offences than men (Barry and McIvor 2008; McIvor and Burman 2011). Men also outnumber women in all offence categories with the exception of prostitution. However, women account for higher proportions of convictions for other violence convictions (38%); fraud convictions (33%) and shoplifting (28%) (Scottish Government 2016). Scotland has one of the highest incarceration rates in Western Europe, with 140 prisoners per 100,000, in a population of 5.4 million people (Institute for Criminal Policy Research 2016). There are currently 364 women in prison in Scotland, making up approximately 5% of the prison population (Scottish Prison Service 2016a). The female prison population has dramatically increased in the last 10 years and is rising at a higher rate than the male prison population in Scotland (Scottish Government 2015). Table 1 shows how the female prison population has changed between 2004 until 2014². There has been a relatively steady increase in the adult female prison population, while the numbers of young women in custody has decreased over the last 10 years.

A high proportion of women in custody in Scotland are serving short-term sentences. In 2013-2014 almost 67% percent of the average daily female prison population were serving sentences of less than four years and 75% of these sentences were less than 2 years (Scottish Government 2015). Short-term prisoners have the highest reconviction rates and the most complex issues of prisoners, such as high levels of

¹ Sacro is an acronym for Safeguarding Communities Reducing Reoffending.

² The most recent data available from the Scottish Government website (Scottish Government 2015)

unemployment, homelessness, substance misuse and a lack of education (Maguire and Raynor 2006; Lewis et al. 2007; Armstrong and Weaver 2010).

Table 1: Average female daily population in penal establishments in Scotland by type of custody: 2004-05 to 2013-14

	2004 -05	2005 -06	2006 -07	2007 -08	2008 -09	2009 -10	2010 -11	2011 -12	2012 -13	2013 -14
Remand	85	84	101	117	133	105	105	108	107	106
Untried	56	57	72	75	85	63	68	67	69	70
Awaiting sentence	29	27	29	42	49	41	38	41	38	36
Sentenced	247	251	253	256	280	321	331	361	353	326
Young offenders	30	24	30	24	26	28	32	28	21	17
Adult offenders	212	221	216	223	247	286	286	320	319	297
Fine defaulters	4	4	3	2	1	1	0	0	1	1
Recall from supervision /licence	1	2	4	7	7	6	13	13	11	10
Total	332	335	354	373	413	426	436	469	460	432

Short-term prison sentences can have a more damaging effect on circumstances than one long-term sentence (Armstrong and Weaver 2010). Due to the disruption that prison causes, many women will return to an environment post prison that presents circumstances worse than those prior to their incarceration (McIvor and Burman 2011). It is common for women leaving prison to experience multiple issues including: drug addiction, mental health, housing, poverty, healthcare and childcare (Wilkinson 2004; McIvor et al. 2009; Wright et al. 2012).

Although men and women in the criminal justice system have a number of similar problems, issues of poverty, self-harm, family issues and victimisation have been argued to be disproportionately high for women (Gelsthorpe et al. 2007; Angiolini et al. 2012). Female prisoners are more likely to self-harm than male prisoners (Rickford 2003; Home Office 2014). Hawton et al. (2014) found that self-harm rates were more than 10 times higher in female prisons than male prisons in England and Wales. Repetition of self-harm was also more common in women. Women in prison are also

more likely to have experienced emotional, physical or sexual abuse as a child compared to men and to have been victims of domestic violence as adults (Loveless 2010; Ministry of Justice 2012). Reports on HMP Cornton Vale in Scotland (women only prison) in 2007 reported that 80% of women had mental health problems and 98% had problems with addiction (Scottish Executive 2005). A 2015 survey of 257 female prisoners in Scotland revealed that 38% of respondents reported drug use to be a problem outside of prison, 45% reported that they were under the influence of drugs at the time of their offence and 24% indicated that they committed the offence to obtain money for drugs. One third of women reported being drunk at the time of their offence (Scottish Prison Service 2016b).

Female prisoners are more likely to be primary caregivers of children under the age of 18 than male prisoners (Huebner et al. 2010) and this creates additional stress for the woman while incarcerated. Custodial sentences can cause significant disruption to their children and family (Corston 2007). A Home Office survey by Caddle and Crisp (1997), which included interviews with over 1000 imprisoned mothers, reported that 71% of children were living with their mother at the time of their imprisonment. For 33% of children, their mother was their sole care-giver when they were taken into custody. The majority of children were cared for by grandparents during the mother's period of custody, even if they had been living with both mother and father at the time of incarceration. Of the 257 women in Scotland who recently completed a survey while in prison, the majority were mothers (65%) and just over 50% of these women had children under the age of 18, with a third of women identifying as single mothers. Over 50% of the women who were mothers reported that they were not involved in caring for their children before they entered custody and a similar number of women reported that they would not be caring for their children when they left custody (Scottish Prison Service 2016b).

The distress that women experience as a result of being separated from children and the follow on impact on children's lives may be considered as a 'pain of imprisonment', experienced to a greater extent by women than men. Sykes (1958) identified the five 'pains of imprisonment' as: deprivation of liberty; deprivation of goods and services; deprivation of heterosexual relationships; deprivation of autonomy and deprivation of security. Women may also experience 'pains of imprisonment' to a greater extent than men as they have higher rates of mental

illness, self-harm and suicide (Gelsthorpe et al. 2007). Women are also often imprisoned further from their home than men due to the smaller numbers of women in custody and the location of women's prisons (Hedderman 2010).

The weaknesses of the criminal justice system in relation to female offending first became apparent in Scotland during the 1990s, when seven women in Cornton Vale Prison³ committed suicide within 30 months. This prompted an urgent review of the female prison system by the Chief Inspector of Prisons and Chief Inspector of Social work. The resulting report 'A Safer Way' (1998) made a number of recommendations and led to the formation of an inter-agency forum focusing on women offenders. Further reports in both Scotland and UK wide (Scottish Executive 2002; Corston 2007; Gelsthorpe et al. 2007) have continued to highlight the need for services that address the complex 'needs' of women in the criminal justice context and reduce the number of women going to prison. However, despite this focus, the female prison population has continued to rise.

In 2012, a Commission on Women Offenders appointed by The Scottish Government⁴ published a report that reviewed the services available for women in the criminal justice system and put forward a number of recommendations (Angiolini et al. 2012). The Commission questioned the suitability of prison for women, arguing that the issues most commonly related to women's offending could not be adequately met in custody. These needs included: higher rates of mental health problems than men; high rates of drug problems; histories of physical and sexual abuse and dependent children (Angiolini et al. 2012). It also highlighted the challenges experienced post-release by women, such as securing stable accommodation and accessing benefits. The Commission made a number of recommendations that aimed to improve outcomes for women including: increased availability of supported accommodation; the establishment of community justice centres across Scotland; changes to mental health services; increased use of alternatives to prosecution and remand and the availability of intensive mentoring for all women at risk of reoffending or custody.

³ Cornton Vale is the only all female prison in Scotland.

⁴ The oversight and administration of criminal justice is devolved to the Scottish Government from the UK Parliament.

Despite a lack of clarity around the definition, processes and impact of mentoring, the Scottish Government accepted the recommendations put forward by the Commission that mentoring has value for women who offend. This has resulted in mentoring being implemented more widely in Scotland. There is a necessity for research to address the gap in knowledge surrounding mentoring and explore these uncertainties.

Origins of mentoring

Mentoring in the criminal justice system in the United Kingdom (UK) was first introduced in a youth justice context, based on programmes that had been developed in the United States (US) in the 1970s and 1980s. The Big Brothers Big Sisters Project (BBBS) was the largest mentoring project in the U.S at this time, pairing a young person with an adult volunteer based on background, preferences of both parties and geographical location (Tierney et al. 1995). Mentoring involved the young person and mentor meeting approximately 3 times a month over a period of at least 12 months, taking part in activities such as studying, sports and cooking. The young person was commonly from a single parent, low income household and many had experienced environments of family violence or substance abuse. Official aims of the mentoring project included: allowing the young person to develop a successful relationship; provide social, cultural and recreational enrichment; improve peer relationships; improve self-concept and improve motivation, attitude and achievement related to their education (Tierney et al. 1995). It was expected that 'positive role modelling' via the adult volunteer would have a beneficial impact on the development of the adolescent.

Mentoring was adopted in the UK in the early 1990s (Newburn and Shiner 2006) and was based on a model similar to BBBS with the aim of helping young people who were socially disadvantaged and marginalised. Extensive evaluations by the Youth Justice Board have produced mixed results regarding the effectiveness of mentoring (Tarling et al. 2004; St James-Roberts et al. 2005). Tarling et al. (2004) reviewed evaluations of 39 mentoring schemes in the UK. These schemes were focused on the goal of a reduction/prevention of offending or risk of offending in young people. The 12-month follow-up study of 369 young people, three quarters of whom were male, revealed that over the year, just over half of the sample reoffended (that had come to the attention of police/courts), girls were much less likely to reoffend than boys, younger participants in the programme were less likely to reoffend and those with fewer previous offences were less likely to offend. However, it should be noted that

this may be due to girls being less likely to offend than boys, even without mentoring support. Therefore, there was not convincing evidence that mentoring produced a reduction in reoffending rates or that any reductions were maintained long-term. Of those young people who were referred to the scheme, there were a high number who did not take up the opportunity. Tarling et al. (2004) also reported that 42% of the mentoring relationships ended earlier than planned, with the main reason being that the young person had lost interest or was not committed to the relationship. Other less common reasons for disengaging with the mentor include: moving out of the area; admitted to a Young Offenders Institution; family objections or being taken into care. Occasionally the mentors ended the relationship prematurely, if they moved out of the area; could not afford the time commitment or lost interest. This high attrition rate, is a common finding in evaluations of mentoring schemes, and suggests that mentoring is not addressing the needs of many of those people who it is thought to benefit. Mentoring, therefore, may only be associated with positive outcomes for individuals who have less complex issues prior to engagement with a mentor.

The mentoring projects in youth justice aimed to improve the skills of young people with the aim of reducing offending behaviour. The models were therefore focused on the individual and the belief that the young people were deficient in appropriate skills and behaviours. Although the young people came from disadvantaged backgrounds and poverty, the mentoring models did not fully account for this.

Mentoring of adult offenders

In recent years, mentoring has been adapted for adults in the criminal justice system most commonly with the aim of reducing reoffending. For women, it is anticipated that mentoring will 'reintegrate' women into the community and allow them to develop positive relationships and social capital (Brown and Ross 2010a). It has also been viewed as support that can help women to meet the conditions of community statutory orders (Angiolini et al. 2012). Similar to mentoring services in youth justice, mentoring projects for adults have focused on individual behaviours and attitudes. A rapid evidence assessment of 18 studies by the Home Office (Jolliffe and Farrington 2007) found that seven studies reported a positive impact of mentoring on reoffending. These particular studies, however, were of lower methodological quality than the other studies in the review that did not show a significant impact of mentoring on reoffending. Reoffending rates were most affected when mentoring sessions were

frequent and long, however total duration of the mentoring relationship did not appear to have an effect. Only those participants who had remained in the mentoring service at the time of the follow-up evaluation had reduced their offending. There was therefore, no evidence that mentoring had an impact on reoffending after mentoring had ended. Mentoring programmes were also found to be more effective when they were part of a package of support services (Jolliffe and Farrington 2007). It can be argued that a focus on reoffending, may not present an accurate measure of the impact of mentoring.

Mentoring schemes in the criminal justice system are varied in terms of the types of activities carried out by mentors and mentees. For example, one mentoring scheme in the U.S., described by Koschmann and Peterson (2013) used the principles of motivational interviewing, with activities concentrated mainly in prison, discussing goals that the mentee would aspire to after leaving prison. The volunteer mentor met with the mentee at the prison gate on release and continued the relationship in the community for as long as both of them wished. This consisted of the mentor accompanying the mentee to appointments, assisting with paperwork and social activities such as walking or shopping.

The mentoring process that Brown and Ross (2010a) described, a women only service in Australia, also involved volunteer mentors meeting the woman in prison. After release, the mentor assisted the woman through attending court appointments, providing character references, helping the mentee to access educational opportunities and/or assisting with welfare benefit applications. Outcomes which have been highlighted in mentoring research have also been varied and have included measures of confidence, self-esteem and reoffending. There is therefore a need to establish the activities and outcomes which are prioritised in mentoring programmes for women in Scotland and whether these address the key issues of women. The present study seeks to address this gap for the mentoring service under exploration.

As the role definition for mentors is varied across the literature, it is important to establish what mentors do in practice, whether this is in line with the rhetoric of mentoring presented by policy makers and what positive impact (if any) this has on the women who access mentoring.

The lack of evidence to support mentoring as a tool for reducing reoffending also raises the question of whether mentoring should be delivered in the criminal justice context. This thesis will also explore whether the criminal justice context influences the mentoring service at Sacro.

Why mentoring?

The 'pathways perspective' of female offending, which originated in the United States and has gained prominence since the early 2000s, has been drawn upon in the development of services which claim to address the needs of women which are viewed to be related to their offending (Bloom et al. 2003). It states that women offend as a result of coping with early experiences of abuse and trauma. For example, pathways to crime for women have been argued to include running away from home to escape abuse, living on the streets, homelessness, addiction and poverty. The pathways perspective has been informed by relational theory, which claims that those women who have experienced abusive relationships in childhood have failed to develop a sense of self and self worth due to the impact of these abusive relationships on their psychological development (Bloom et al. 2003). The potential for mentoring to provide a positive relationship for women and support 'reintegration' has been argued to help reduce offending (Brown and Ross 2010a). This has also been linked to social capital, a theory, that has also been utilised by scholars exploring 'desistance' and has been drawn upon in some mentoring research studies (WIPAN 2012; Brown and Ross 2010a). Social capital has been defined as 'the resources that inhere in social relationships and networks characterised by shared norms and reciprocal bonds' (McNeill and Weaver 2010: 27). Brown and Ross (2010a) claimed that mentoring can provide access to social capital directly through the emotional support of the mentor and indirectly through an advocacy role or providing references and speaking on behalf of women. Although relationships are likely to be important for women, to focus on relationships and social capital in this way may take the focus away from women's circumstances and social structural determinants of crime and desistance.

Services with frameworks which appear to only focus on relationships have been criticised for their utilisation of an individualised framework that does not challenge or account for the circumstances that women encounter due to their marginalisation (Pollack 2005; Goodkind 2005, 2009; Hannah-Moffat 2010). These frameworks have

been argued to reflect strategies that aim to put the responsibility onto women for their own circumstances such as poverty. Pollack (2005) drawing on the concept of responsibilisation states that those who offend are viewed as having failed at their own 'self-reform' and require support to become responsible and moral citizens. This thesis will therefore consider these individualising frameworks as the underlying basis of mentoring to establish to what extent they are present or whether mentoring does offer something 'unique' that challenges the inequalities that have contributed to the criminalisation of many women.

Mentoring in the context of Sacro

Sacro, a criminal justice third sector organisation first offered mentoring to women in the criminal justice system prior to the establishment of the Women's Commission in Scotland in 2012. This study therefore provides an opportunity to explore an established mentoring service. Sacro is a third sector organisation that delivers over 60 services across 22 locations in Scotland aimed at supporting people who are involved in the criminal justice system. Services include: housing support; throughcare support, bail services and mentoring services. The organisation currently has almost 400 staff and volunteers (Sacro 2016).

Sacro's Women's Mentoring Service (WMS) was initially set up as a pilot in 2010 in Lanarkshire and funded by the local authority. One Sacro criminal justice worker designed and established the service, working as the sole paid mentor for the service until 2012 when the service was expanded. The paid mentor received some support from volunteer mentors but the vast majority of mentoring was carried out by one worker. The service was described to service users via leaflets as 'Offering support to females aged 16 and over in North and South Lanarkshire who want to reduce their offending and live a healthier lifestyle'. Women were offered one to one practical and emotional support by a mentor, with no time limit on the length of mentoring relationship, within the constraints of working hours. The mentor and mentee would meet on a weekly basis, setting and working towards goals based on the needs of the women. The service offered women help to: address issues such as health, addiction and accommodation through accompanying them to agencies or signposting; learn budgeting skills; reduce social isolation; improve confidence and self-esteem; access education, training and new activities; maintain contact with other agencies and reintegrate into the community. This service has continued to be funded by the local

authority on a yearly basis and has been expanded to Kirkcaldy, Glasgow and more recently Forth Valley and Edinburgh through funding from the Scottish Government. All of the locations deliver a similar service, with some small differences in referral criteria. The Lanarkshire service is the only service that offers a self-referral option (see Appendix 1 for details of all referral criteria).

Sacro received increased funding from the Scottish Government to develop their existing mentoring service and also to deliver mentoring as part of a Public Social Partnership⁵ (PSP) with other organisations. Short term funding was made available from October 2012 to March 2013 to increase the capacity of current mentoring services or set up partnerships to develop mentoring services. This allowed Sacro to expand existing mentoring services and offer new mentoring services in Edinburgh and Forth Valley. Longer term funding from June 2013 to March 2015 was made available for partnerships of third sector organisations to deliver mentoring services across Scotland. Funding was allocated to a PSP led by Sacro that set up a mentoring service called Shine. Sacro is one of eight organisations⁶ delivering Shine mentoring services across Scotland.

In Sacro locations that have two differently funded mentoring services, there is a paid mentor responsible for mentoring the Shine referrals and a paid mentor responsible for the referrals to Sacro's WMS. The service that is delivered on a daily basis by the mentors is similar across Shine and the WMS, however, differences do exist in terms of required paperwork and referral criteria. Shine mentors also receive separate training and attend different events than mentors from Sacro's WMS. Women eligible for Shine are those who are on short term prison sentences, remand and those who are at risk of breaching their community order. Therefore, the women who are referred to Shine are likely to have a high number of needs and those leaving prison are likely to need urgent practical support. Due to the initial substantial funding made available for the Shine mentoring service in the short term, and the need to ensure this funding is continued there has been a specific focus on mentoring within Sacro, including Sacro's WMS. The present study explores Sacro WMS specifically and not the Shine

⁵ Public Social Partnerships (PSP) are partnerships between the public sector and third sector with the aim of collaborating on public service, design and delivery.

⁶ In addition to Sacro, the following organisations are part of the PSP: Access To Industry; Apex Scotland; Barnardo's; Circle Scotland; The Wise Group; Turning Point Scotland and Venture Trust Scotland.

mentoring service due to the complexity around the Shine mentoring service, which consists of a number of different partner agencies⁷.

The present study

This study provides a comprehensive exploration of mentoring, determining the underlying assumptions, goals, processes and impact of the service for women in the criminal justice system. Fifty interviews in total, including interviews with 19 women who used the mentoring service (plus 2 follow-up interviews), 11 paid mentors, 3 volunteer mentors, 9 social work staff and 6 other Sacro staff members provide an in-depth understanding of the role of mentoring in the lives of the women. Quantitative data from case files supplements this information, however the richness of the data is provided by the qualitative accounts. This thesis seeks to answer the main research question: What are the goals, processes and impact of mentoring?

The main objectives of the study are to:

- Explore the views and experiences of the women who participate in mentoring;
- Identify the issues of women who access the mentoring service;
- Describe the characteristics, operations and goals of the mentoring schemes;
- Explore the contribution made by volunteer mentors;
- Explore the impact of mentoring for women who use the service.

Current criminological literature has not provided clarity in the definition of mentoring in a criminal justice and Scottish context. There is no evidence to suggest that mentoring is 'different' from other services in place such as befriending or support work. Existing research exploring mentoring projects for women in the criminal justice system in Scotland and specifically projects which utilise largely paid mentors has been limited. Furthermore, there has been a lack of research that explores whether there is a theoretical basis for mentoring.

One of the key starting points for the research is therefore to identify the common issues and circumstances of the women who use the service by listening to their

⁷ See Mulholland et al. (2016) for an evaluation of the Shine mentoring services.

accounts. In order to understand the process of mentoring and whether it addresses the difficulties faced by women, it is important to also gain the perspectives and goals of the staff who deliver the mentoring service, and those who work in partnership with the mentors such as social work staff.

It has been argued that services need to be introduced that meet the unique needs of women who offend and are not based on models that are previously adapted for men (Bloom et al. 2003). These services must take into account the circumstances related to gender inequalities, such as poverty, addiction and victimisation. This thesis will, therefore, adopt a critical feminist approach to explore whether the Sacro's WMS does offer a service that is innovative and therefore accounts for the circumstances of the women who access it.

There has been a lack of theoretical consideration of the underlying philosophy of mentoring. This thesis attempts to contribute to this gap in the literature through critically considering how mentoring aims to address key issues that women who access mentoring are experiencing and whether this goes beyond an individualistic approach.

Layout of thesis

Chapter 2 encompasses an international literature review on the importance of gender in the criminal justice system. There is an initial discussion detailing the issues and circumstances which are common in the lives of women who offend. This follows with an overview of desistance scholarship in relation to women. Several topics are discussed in relation to a 'Gender-specific' approach, including the pathways perspective to female offending, an individualistic approach to working with women in the criminal justice system and recent developments in Scotland following the recommendations of the Commission on Women Offenders. The chapter concludes by raising the systemic issues of short-term funding and sustainability which are associated with some services for women.

A review of the existing research on mentoring in the criminal justice system is provided in Chapter 3, with a focus on identifying the key components of mentoring and what the role involves in the criminal justice context. There is a critical consideration of the impact of mentoring, particularly in relation to women, alongside an exploration of the components of mentoring that have been argued to address the

specific issues of women. Social capital is discussed with a view to establishing what its role is in mentoring, if any. The value of volunteer mentors and peer mentors as described by the literature is then discussed. Finally, the recruitment and training of mentors is briefly reviewed.

Chapter 4 discusses the methodological approach adopted, describing a feminist approach and discussing the value of a qualitative methodological focus in the study. A reflexive account of the access and interview process is discussed and the significance of the researcher's position as 'embedded' is considered, continuing with a discussion of ethical considerations and challenges encountered during the research process. The chapter concludes with a summary of the data analysis process adopted.

Chapter 5 introduces the first of three findings chapters, beginning with a description of the reasons why women in the study were referred for mentoring, followed with an overview of the offence type and issues experienced by women when they first entered mentoring. The main focus of this chapter is an exploration of the issues experienced by women from their own perspective.

In Chapter 6, the second of the findings chapters, there is an examination of the mentoring process. The chapter opens with a discussion of the recruitment and training of staff. The definition and goals of mentoring are then reviewed, noting differences in perspectives of women who use the service and staff. There is a focus on specific mentoring activities that take place, with a consideration of the influence of the criminal justice context throughout, including multi-agency working with statutory services. The role of volunteer mentors and social workers is also discussed. The chapter concludes with a consideration of whether the service is 'gender-specific.' Throughout the chapter there will be a consideration of whether the underlying assumptions of mentoring are based on an approach that addresses key issues for women.

In Chapter 7, the final findings chapter, there is an exploration of the impact of mentoring for the women who use the service. Key areas identified by the women who used the service are compared to mentor and staff perspectives. Observed outcomes are considered for their theoretical importance. There is a discussion around peer mentoring and its possible role in personal development and empowerment for

women. The measurement of impact within Sacro is then considered, followed by a discussion of the importance of funding and sustainability for the mentoring service.

Chapter 8 concludes the thesis with a discussion of key findings from chapters five to seven. This chapter then highlights the implications for policy, practice and future research and consolidates the contribution of the thesis.

Chapter 2 - Women in the criminal justice system

This chapter commences by considering the background and circumstances of women who have recently left prison or are on statutory orders in Scotland and internationally, in order to identify the issues that mentoring is seeking to address. This is followed with a consideration of the relevance of desistance theories for women. Assumptions underlying 'gender-specific' services are then explored, beginning with a discussion about the 'pathways perspective' of female offending, which is a common framework for services within the criminal justice context that have been designed for women. This leads onto a review of literature which suggests that many services for women are based on an individualistic approach, with a limited consideration of context. The final area for discussion under the 'gender-specific' approach is the development of services in Scotland for women. Funding and sustainability are then presented as key issues that influence the impact of any services for women in the criminal justice system.

Background

Evaluations of post-release experiences of women have been informative about the issues women experience after they leave prison. McIvor et al. (2009) interviewed women in custody in Australia, then again three and twelve months after release. Generally, women reported that they were most concerned about the risk of using drugs again when leaving prison, with accessing accommodation being the second most common concern. Women who were motivated to remain drug free faced the barriers of inadequate treatment and lengthy journeys to access prescribed methadone. Less than half of those interviewed were living at the same address 12 months later, as they were on release. Limited availability of stable accommodation meant that some women had to return to living with an abusive partner. Housing in communities with high crime rates contributed to feelings of vulnerability for women as they feared for their safety. These communities offered little hope in the way of employment opportunities. Self-efficacy and personal agency appeared to facilitate positive change for women and those who continued to offend were often women that had returned to using drugs after prison. The reasons women gave for their drug use after prison varied and included: the influence of other people; boredom; drug use by a partner or friend; stressful experiences of bereavement; redundancy; homelessness and the breakdown of relationships. McIvor et al. (2009) also found many women

experienced social isolation after they left prison and described feeling stressed and lonely due to a lack of support and multiple demands. It was often the case that women would avoid previous partners or friends who they associated with their offending. Some women also reported a reluctance to attempt to build new relationships, due to the fear of rejection. Coping well after prison was only experienced by women who had the support of friends, family and agencies. Women valued workers who took an interest in them, provided positive feedback, assisted with applications and escorted them to appointments. A worker who showed an interest in the individual needs of the woman rather than just monitoring her behaviour for statutory reasons was highly valued by women. These findings from Mclvor et al. (2009) highlight the difficulties faced by women leaving prison when there was not adequate support in the community or a safe environment for women to return to. The disruption and harm caused by imprisonment raises the question of whether the imprisonment of women is appropriate when many of the crimes committed were not serious and were related to addiction and financial difficulties⁸.

Stigmatising attitudes directed towards those with a criminal record also present a barrier for women attempting to secure employment after leaving prison. Stigma is mentioned more frequently in the accounts of women who offend compared to men (Mclvor et al. 2004). Goffman (1963: 9) defined stigma 'as the situation of the individual who is disqualified from full social acceptance' as a result of possessing 'an attribute that is deeply discrediting'. The perception of the attribute as deviating from social norms is what makes the attribute stigmatising. Poverty, the label of offender and drug addiction can all be considered to be 'discrediting attributes' as they are viewed to be outside of the norm. Women are viewed as 'doubly deviant' due to their violation of gender norms in addition to their criminal offence (Lloyd 1995).

Sharpe (2015) explored the experiences of young mothers with a history of offending and found that a perceived or actual stigma prevented women from attending services. For example, one young mother in Sharpe's study avoided taking her infant to a children's centre because she expected a negative reaction from police officers who also attended the centre with their children. Mclvor et al. (2004) found that young women were more likely to talk about shame and embarrassment in relation to their

⁸ This is not advocating a 'soft approach' to all offences but refers to those women who have committed less serious crimes and do not pose a risk to the safety of others.

offending than young men. The young women in the study reported feelings of guilt about the offences they had committed, and a belief that other people knew that they had offended. It was important to the young women that they were viewed as 'desisting' even if they had recently committed an offence (McIvor et al. 2004). In another study, women when speaking about their experiences of undertaking a community sentence (Malloch and McIvor 2011) also reported feeling embarrassed while completing assignments due to the perception that others would know they had committed an offence. They also described how they experienced feelings of shame when they were placed on probation. Some women reported that they did not label themselves as offenders because their involvement in the criminal justice system was related to their addiction and not 'dangerous' offences. Women in Malloch and McIvor's (2011) study which reflected on two studies involving women serving community sentences and Drug Treatment and Testing Orders noted the importance of being accepted by social work staff regardless of their offence.

Dodge and Pogrebin (2001:52) found that women also experienced the 'pains of imprisonment', described in Chapter 1, after release from prison through feelings of shame because they had failed to meet the norms of 'a woman, a good parent, and a responsible citizen.' This shame was exacerbated when others in their community showed disapproval towards them due to their offender label. Those women who have addiction issues and children in care are judged as 'bad mothers' because they do not meet the norms of society of what constitutes a good mother (Dodge and Pogrebin 2001). When a woman leaves prison, she has to cope with being labelled as an offender by others in the community (Uggen et al. 2004). The experience of stigma can contribute to low feelings of self-worth and the continuation of economic marginalisation.

Carlton and Segrave (2011) have also argued that these 'pains of imprisonment' are not distinct to the prison itself but for many women the pains exist before, during and after imprisonment. This is due to the structural disadvantage in the lives of many women from a young age that has resulted in state intervention and associated harms throughout their lives. Baldry (2010) has described this as a disadvantaged space, where women are located from an early age. This 'space' consists of an environment with poor housing, abuse, poor schooling and time spent in care. As many of these young women begin life marginalised economically, this continues into adulthood. It is

clear that the majority of women who are subject to punishment from the state, come from this marginalised social class, which interacts with gender and shapes the issues that have been discussed, for example, women are pathologised for being poor and not behaving in line with gender stereotypes (Skeggs 1997).

Data from evaluation studies of services for women who offend, suggest that women subject to statutory orders have similar backgrounds and circumstances to women in prison in Scotland. For example, in an evaluation of the 218 Centre in Scotland, (a residential and community support for women with a contact to the criminal justice system) of 143 women who engaged with the centre during a 12-month period only 14 women had ever been in employment and only 12 women had qualifications of any kind. Stable accommodation was only evident for a third of women, while the majority of women had no fixed abode, were in temporary accommodation, supported accommodation or in unsafe/unsuitable accommodation. Sixty-seven percent of women had at least one child, and almost a third of these women had at least one child adopted or in the care of a relative (Loucks et al. 2006). Women referred to the 218 Centre also had high levels of trauma and abuse throughout their lives. According to client records taken at initial assessment many women were currently in abusive relationships (21%), while 41% reported having experienced abuse in the past and 46% reported having experienced another significant major trauma (Loucks et al. 2006). As noted by the authors there is a likelihood that these figures are underestimated as women do not always open up about these experiences at an initial assessment.

A recent evaluation of 16 community justice centres in Scotland also provided insight into the circumstances of women in the criminal justice system (Dryden and Souness 2015). The evaluation reported that of 848 women with dependent children under 16, 33% of the women had their children living with them, 36% had unrestricted or supervised access and 20% had no access to their children (for the remaining 12% of women with children, their status in relation to their children was unknown). Poor mental and emotional health, unemployment, substance misuse and unstable relationships were also reported to be key issues for women who engaged with the community justice centres. The attitude of women towards offending was not viewed as a key issue as the majority of women stated that they did not view offending as acceptable (Dryden and Souness 2015).

Poverty is evident in the lives of many of the women who attend services within the criminal justice system, with a high proportion of women receiving welfare benefits or attempting to access benefits after leaving prison (Burgess et al. 2011; Dryden and Souness 2015). As argued by Gelsthorpe (2010: 380) 'the penal treatment of women is often indistinguishable from "welfare treatment"' and this is not a new phenomenon. The 'feminisation of poverty' was identified by Glendinning and Millar (1992) and since then, successive UK governments have prioritised a clamp down on 'benefit fraud' (Gelsthorpe 2010). Recent social policy changes in areas of welfare reform in the UK have impacted negatively on those who are already disadvantaged and this has a disproportionate impact on women. This has included significant cuts to benefits, tax credits, pay and pensions since 2010. These changes have disproportionately impacted on women because more women are dependent on welfare benefits than men, as on average 20% of women's income comes from benefits and tax credits, compared to 10% of men. The majority of lone parents (92%) are women, as are 95% of lone parents who claim income support (Engender 2014, 2015). The new Universal Credit benefit provides one payment per household, which can prevent women from being economically independent. For those in abusive relationships it limits their access to resources (Engender 2014, 2015). This impact on women means that they are more likely to be in poverty and unable to change their circumstances. It is clear that the criminalisation of many women in the UK and internationally is associated with disadvantage, poverty, unemployment, psychological distress, addiction, victimisation and abuse (Loucks 2004). The lack of resources that have been available throughout their lives to address these issues and the erosion of the welfare state have contributed to their criminalisation. Services which are designed for women, therefore, face the difficult task of attempting to make changes to women's lives that can be sustained in an environment of frequent cuts to welfare and services.

Desistance and women

Policy and evaluation reports often state that 'desistance' is a key goal for organisations when working with women in the criminal justice system (Angiolini et al. 2012: 77; Dryden and Souness 2015; Mulholland et al. 2016). Desistance is defined as 'the long-term abstinence from criminal behaviour among those for whom offending had become a pattern of behaviour' (McNeill et al. 2012:3). It is now widely accepted by academics that desistance requires both individual and social changes (Kazemian 2007). Key theories that are often drawn upon in the desistance literature focus on the

acquisition of social bonds and associated informal social control, changes in identity and cognitive shifts. Sampson and Laub's (1993) theory of informal social control states that desistance is largely achieved when social bonds are made through marriage, relationships or employment in adulthood. It is argued that these social bonds offer a reduction in 'unstructured' time, an income, opportunity for identity change, new relationships, increased self-esteem and significant time spent with non-offenders (Farrall 2004). Maruna (2001) found that an identity shift was an important component in the desistance process and those individuals who were desisting did not view themselves as criminals. They also felt that they had control over their lives. According to Giordano et al. (2002) there are four cognitive transformations that are required for desistance: readiness to change; being exposed to 'hooks for change' (e.g. marriage/employment); the process of developing a 'replacement self'/new identity and viewing deviant behaviour as less desirable. Giordano et al. (2002) also reported that relationships and employment were important in the desistance process. However, they argued that for both men and women it was the 'normative orientation' that was crucial in a partner. In practice this meant that partners who were 'different' from offenders were important in the desistance process. They were different in that they did not break the law and displayed 'conventional' behaviour such as being employed, not drinking alcohol to excess or not making 'rash' decisions.

The recognition in literature and policy of the specific needs and circumstances of women in the criminal justice system has resulted in some scholars examining whether theories of desistance are 'relevant' for both men and women. It has been argued that theories of desistance are focused on men and do not account for life histories and circumstances of women, as they focus on gaining social bonds such as employment, marriage or family (Baldry 2010). Families of origin have also been associated with the onset of drug use, or physical or sexual abuse of women in the criminal justice system (DeHart 2008). Previous research has reported that some women distance themselves from family and friends that they view to be linked to their offending. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that these social bonds have the same importance for women in relation to offending as they arguably have for men who offend.

There are however, increasing numbers of desistance studies which include women in their sample. A recent literature review of 44 studies of female desistance by

Rodermond et al. (2016) highlighted a range of factors that have been found to be associated with women who have reduced or stopped offending. The findings were mixed, however, key factors included economic independence, relationships and stable accommodation. The reduction and termination of offending was related to relationships with children, partners and marriage, and depended on factors such as quality and satisfaction with relationship. Although being a mother provided motivation to not offend, the financial stress associated with being a parent meant that this was not always possible. Stable mental health, abstaining from drugs and having sufficient financial resources to live in stable accommodation were associated with women not offending. Results were also inconsistent in relation to employment, as being employed was not always associated with a reduction in offending, which may have been a result of many women being employed in low paid jobs (Cobbina 2009).

A Scottish study by Mclvor et al. (2004) interviewed young people about their views on offending and found that relational aspects and moral reasons were more likely to be cited by women than men as reasons for stopping offending behaviour. Ending a relationship often gave young women the opportunity to stop offending. Many young women reported that their partner introduced them to drugs and they had not offended prior to their drug use. In contrast, young men commonly reported that they had offended prior to their drug use. Personal choice and agency were important for men in their reports of desistance. Mclvor et al. (2004) reported that young women were more likely to make a conscious decision to remove themselves from contact with 'delinquent peers' than men. For men, a life change such as employment was more likely to be associated with separation from 'delinquent peers' (Mclvor et al. 2004: 192). Gender differences were also evident when young people talked about their own experiences of being victims of crimes. Young women were more likely to emphasise the impact that the experience of victimisation had on them emotionally and show empathy towards other victims of similar crimes. Young men were more likely to discuss processes that took place after the offence such as compensation procedures (Mclvor et al. 2004). Therefore, young women were more likely to focus on the relational aspect of being a victim of crime than men.

Self-efficacy has also been noted as an important factor in the lives of women who have experienced positive changes in their life after a period of imprisonment (Eaton 1993; Mclvor et al. 2009). Eaton (1993) interviewed 34 women following a period of

imprisonment and a change in circumstances. The author noted that common among the women who made positive changes in their lives was the sense that they now had control over their lives and believed that they did have choices. Eaton noted that the women required recognition and acceptance from others that they had made changes in their lives and this self-worth was further enhanced by reciprocal relationships. Relationships with children and moving away from a dependant relationship with a male partner were important in the accounts of the women in Eaton's study. All of the participants who moved away from a dependent relationship were employed and therefore were not reliant on the partner for resources. This highlights the importance of employment opportunities and the impact this may have on relationships. Eaton noted that although there were women in long-term relationships with a male or female partner, they stressed that they were independent within the relationship.

The complex nature of the connection between relationships and desistance for women was noted by Leverentz (2006). Interviews with women in the United States who had previously offended and their romantic partners over the course of a year revealed that many women avoided relationships altogether to stop offending. On release from prison or shortly afterwards, despite an intention to stop drug use and offending, some women returned to relationships with ex-partners which on occasion led to relapse. However, a small number of women were able to stop offending together with a partner with an offending history, suggesting it is not only 'pro-social' partners who promoted 'desistance'. Leverentz (2006) suggested that the avoidance of relationships was a beneficial strategy for women due to the association of previous relationships with offending. However, this puts the responsibility of 'quality' relationships on the women rather than focusing on the abusive men with which they were involved. Some participants in Leverentz's study did enter relationships with men who were also ex-drug users and received positive support. These relationships were then viewed as evidence that not only 'pro-social' partners are beneficial for women who wish to stop drug use and offending and led the author to suggest 'the need to more carefully define prosocial and antisocial partners and bonds...As long as both partners are in recovery, relationships with others with histories of drug use or offending can provide a strong basis of shared experience' (Leverentz 2006: 483-484). This highlights the complexity of the consideration of relationships when delivering services to women in the criminal justice system. Instead of a focus on relationships, and the behaviours associated with this, there should be concern with

creating economic situations for women that would reduce the need for women to rely on abusive men for resources (Hannah-Moffat 2007).

Although desistance theories do account for social context and circumstances in their original form (Graham and McNeill 2016), in practice there can be a prioritisation of individual factors such as confidence and self-esteem. The challenge for services in the criminal justice context is to not reduce desistance theories to only individual factors in practice. Rather than understanding desistance to be achieved through subscribing to specific behaviours (e.g. the avoidance of relationships) services must also recognise how circumstances can impact on choice and behaviour.

‘Gender-specific’ approach

Pathways Perspective

The recognition of the specific issues and circumstances that women who offend often experience, and the gender differences presented in the desistance literature have led to a renewed policy focus on services for women in the criminal justice system. This has led to the development of ‘gender-specific’ services (Bloom and Covington 1998). Gender-specific⁹ services have been described as ‘models and services that address the specialised needs of young women who offend (paying particular attention to, for example, abuse issues, relationship skills, self-esteem and self-efficacy, self-harm and substance misuse)’ Sapouna et al. (2011:44). ‘The Bangkok Rules’ which are the UN Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders have been in place since 2010 and provide 70 rules which serve as standards to measure services against when working with women in the criminal justice system (United Nations 2010). The rules cover different areas relevant to women in prison including admission procedures; healthcare; humane treatment; search procedures and children who accompany their mothers into prison. These rules provide examples of gender-specific practice within prisons. For example, one rule states that search procedures within prisons must be carried out by female staff. Another rule advises that the use of instruments of restraint on women are prohibited during labour, during birth and immediately after birth. The rules also claim that prison is not appropriate for the majority of women who commit crimes and they should be given non-custodial sentences whenever possible.

⁹ Gender-specific means services directed towards a specific gender (women or men) however it is generally understood to mean services directed towards women.

The 'gender-specific' approach has been largely based on the 'pathways perspective' of female offending which argues that the most common pathways to crime for women are substance misuse and survival of abuse or poverty (Covington 1998; Bloom et al. 2003) and that women's offending should be considered in the context of the intersection of trauma, substance misuse, mental health and poverty. This perspective says that women's early experiences of victimisation are associated with their future offending behaviours. Theories from psychology, addiction and trauma inform the pathways perspective whose proponents state that addiction, mental illness and 'dysfunctional' relationships lead women to offending behaviour (Bloom et al. 2003).

This focus on trauma in the criminal justice system has been criticised as it follows that women and girls are then labelled as victims which suggests they are passive and lacking agency, in line with gender stereotypes (Goodkind 2005). Women should not however be understood as passive victims without agency, as this does not explain their experiences fully and can contribute to disempowerment, as they can be viewed as being unable to make rational decisions. As being a 'criminal' and part of the criminal justice system is not perceived to be 'feminine', viewing women who offend as vulnerable, passive victims, allows women to continue to be viewed in line with gender stereotypes (Allen 1987). Anderson (2005) argues that many women often have key roles in the drug trade such as providing housing, buying and selling drugs, and subsidizing male dependency. Women also gain economic advantages for themselves and their family. Therefore, women can exert power in these roles, which is in contrast to the view that women are passive and powerless. Agency must also be considered to take into account that not all women experience their circumstances in the same way. Although it is vital to recognise the impact of structure and changes in social policy for women, it does not follow that agency should be dismissed.

The pathways perspective also draws on relational theory which argues that women's psychological development is different to men, with men reaching maturity through the process of separating from others and becoming autonomous, self-sufficient and individualised (Covington 1998). Relational theory states that women develop a sense of self and self-worth through listening, empathising and connecting with others, rather than separating from others (Covington 1998). Bloom et al. (2003) argued that for women to experience change in their lives, they must experience relationships that allow growth and do not replicate the abusive relationships they have experienced in

the past. According to Bloom et al. (2003) it follows that effective intervention must allow women to experience a 'healthy' relationship (Bloom et al. 2003). Although relationships are clearly important for women, to focus on relationships in isolation or as the main 'problem' for women ignores deeper rooted issues such as poverty and homelessness. In order for women to have 'healthy' relationships they must have the opportunity to be economically independent, drug free and have a safe environment in which to live (Hannah-Moffat 2007).

The adoption of relational theory also implies that the responsibility for involvement in 'negative' relationships is always in the control of the woman (Goodkind 2005; Pollack 2007; Turnbull and Hannah-Moffat 2009.) For example, some women are reliant on relationships for resources and lack an alternative choice. A 'positive' relationship with a professional may be of value and a source of emotional support but without significant change to the women's circumstances, the benefits of the support may be short-term and limited.

In the criminal justice context, relationships can be viewed as a 'risk factor' for offending (Hannah Moffat 2010; Pollack 2012) and as a deficit that needs corrected by the individual which suggests that women are being blamed for their own victimisation and subsequent offending (Hannah-Moffat 2007; Pollack 2007). Furthermore, if women have to avoid relationships that are viewed as 'risk factors' for offending, then they may be left socially isolated. It is difficult for women to develop relationships with those viewed as 'pro-social' when they experience stigmatisation from these very people, and they live in a marginalised community where many people have similar problems of addiction and other needs related to criminalisation (Turnbull and Hannah-Moffat 2009). This also ignores the possibility that women could gain support from those with shared experiences even if they are not judged to be 'pro-social' (Leverentz 2006).

Hannah-Moffat and Innocente (2013) in their research on parole board decisions in Canada reported that parole board documents related to cases of Canadian women were largely focused on the relationships that women were involved in. Relationships were viewed as a risk factor for recidivism but also as a potential stabilising factor for the women in the study. For example, family were commonly identified as the origins of abuse for women, however contact with family close to release was viewed as a

potential source of positive support. The narratives within the parole documents also suggested that the women were responsible for victimisation in relationships as they had not developed 'life skills' that would allow them to avoid these relationships (Hannah-Moffat and Innocente 2013) 'Life skills' referred to coping skills to manage their own stress, addiction, loneliness and independent living. The authors reported that relationships were prioritised as a key issue for women by parole staff over a lack of accommodation or employment for women on release. However, these examples from Pollack (2007) and (Hannah-Moffat and Innocente 2013) reflect the Canadian experience of prison and parole and may not be relevant in a Scottish and UK context.

The pathways perspective has raised awareness of the circumstances and experiences of women who have offended, and has offered an alternative to the view that women who offend are 'mad' and 'bad.' This perspective has highlighted the ways in which many women have become involved in the criminal justice system through behaviours in response to the circumstances they faced. However as discussed, when this perspective has been implemented in the criminal justice context, the consideration of the structural issues such as poverty and abuse are often minimised and instead there is a focus on the behaviour of the woman. This is an important area for consideration when assessing how 'gender-specific' approaches are understood and implemented in Scotland and the UK.

An individualistic approach

It is clear that one of the challenges for services that aim to be 'gender-specific' is to offer an alternative to individualistic approaches that do minimise the importance of structural issues and prioritise behaviours and attitudes. A growing body of literature challenges the 'uniqueness' of some programmes that have been defined as 'gender-specific' (Carlen 2008; Corcoran and Fox 2013). These scholars have rejected the notion that 'innovative' approaches designed for women offenders offer a new approach, arguing that they are based on traditional methods of criminal justice approaches, incorporating assumptions related to deficits and 'risk' (Pollack 2005; Goodkind 2005, 2009; Hannah-Moffat 2010). The criminal justice context can therefore undermine the intentions of services. Pollack (2005) drew on Rose's (2000) understanding of the governing of individuals and specifically the argument that liberal democracies rely on individuals governing themselves, when discussing the theoretical basis of services for women in the criminal justice system. This is through

the process of responsibilisation where individuals are held responsible for all events that take place in their lives as these are viewed to be the result of rational choices. These choices reflect the norms and values of the liberal society (Rose 2000; Pollack 2005). This notion of 'responsible citizen' is in line with Foucault's concept of governmentality which states that governments influence the behaviour of individuals through encouragement to monitor their own behaviour and others for its conformity to social norms (Rose 2000). Individuals view themselves and others as displaying moral behaviour when they conform to norms, so any deviation from this behaviour is viewed as immoral (Nettleton et al. 2013). Those who are viewed to have made incorrect choices are blamed for their own disadvantage, as it is attributed to their flawed decision making and an inability to monitor their own behaviour.

Offenders are then perceived as having failed at this self-reform and require 'support' in order to become responsible and moral citizens. In liberal societies this support is provided through 'technologies of government' such as mental health treatment. Pollack (2005:73) draws on Rose (2000) arguing that interventions directed towards women in the criminal justice system contain governing strategies that seek to 'control or contain' the ungovernable. Responsibilisation is solely focused on the individual without considering how choices and behaviours of individuals are influenced by social structures. Pollack (2007) has adapted this concept of responsibilisation to account for the assumptions that are present in services directed towards women in the criminal justice system. It has been argued that while services for women remain focused on the individual then responsibility is placed on the woman for making the 'wrong choice' in response to her circumstances. Subsequently there is an acceptance of the structural inequalities that have contributed to women's circumstances and criminalisation (Baldry 2010; Pollack 2012).

Strategies of 'responsibilisation' such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and therapy within a correctional context reflect a concern with market-driven and neo-liberal values where individuals are viewed as solely responsible for prosperity or hardship. These governing strategies are often delivered through the language of therapy and are therefore perceived to be supportive rather than ruling (Pollack 2007). It has been argued that as CBT is highly structured, it does not allow for a careful analysis of a woman's individual life history and instead focuses on a 'flawed' thinking style (Hubbard and Matthews 2008). It has been suggested that the adaptation of

CBT to include a flexibility that allows for more intimate conversation and disclosure would allow CBT to be effective for women (Cameron and Telfer 2004). However, the principles behind CBT suggest that it does not meet the needs of the majority of women who offend. The use of CBT for women makes the assumption that women have positive choices available to them but flawed thinking is preventing them from seeing these choices (Kendall and Pollack 2003). However, for women blighted by poverty, drug addiction and abusive relationships it is argued that there are few positive choices available (Kendall 2002).

The presence of mental health services within the context of the criminal justice system have also been questioned (Pollack 2005; Pate 2013). Availability of mental health services in prison when there is a lack of services in the community may result in women being sentenced as it is assumed they will get the necessary treatment. However the prison is not a therapeutic environment by definition, and can exacerbate mental health symptoms. Pate (2013) argues that the availability of mental health services within prisons may appear to be beneficial for women, however it contributes to the increased criminalisation of women with mental health problems. Within a criminal justice context, punishment and security will always be prioritised over mental health responses (Carlen and Tombs 2006) and because these women have been criminalised their behaviour from there on in will be viewed negatively. For example, they may be viewed as behaving in a manipulative, attention seeking or devious manner rather than having symptoms of poor mental health (Pate 2013).

An individualistic framework is evident in services that emphasise the importance of outcomes of confidence, self-esteem and empowerment with less consideration of circumstances and context, which may be a reflection of the organisational remit rather than intent. However, a focus on self-esteem and confidence as key outcomes can be problematic when seeking long-term impact on women's lives because circumstances such as poverty, abusive relationships and addiction are the cause of this low self-esteem and confidence (Pollack 2004; Goodkind 2009). To have an impact on these issues will require changes outside of the criminal justice system through government policy change and social change. Attempts to increase the confidence and self-esteem of women may also be restricted by an environment concerned with criminal justice goals of security, monitoring and reducing 'risk.'

Although workers in services for women may not hold the view that self-esteem and confidence directly cause offending, they may be understood as 'key issues' when there is a lack of ability to make changes in other areas. Previous research by Clarke (2004) that included interviews with women who had engaged with a women's centre in the UK, reported that the women had experienced increases in confidence during the time they were accessing the service due to increased access to resources, peer support and new personal and social skills. However, six-month follow-up interviews with the service users revealed that these initial boosts in confidence had not been sustained. This was due to a lack of opportunity to use this new confidence to improve their circumstances, through employment, for example. Without real opportunities for women to increase their income and circumstances, then services can face significant barriers to facilitating long-term changes in the lives of women.

In addition to confidence and self-esteem, 'empowerment' is often cited in evaluations and criminal justice literature as a goal for women who pass through services (Goodkind 2009; Granville 2009; McDermott 2012). Hannah-Moffat (2000) argues that in the context of the criminal justice system, empowerment and similar individualising terms reflect neo-liberal strategies of governance in which women are required to self-govern their own behaviour for its adherence to the objectives of the government, regardless of whether these objectives are meaningful for the woman. These strategies are focused on building self-esteem of women to enable them to take responsibility for their choices and to cope with this responsibility. In the criminal justice system 'empowerment' has become associated with low self-esteem rather than historical definitions of 'empowerment' associated with radical social change (Cruickshank 1999; Hannah-Moffat 2000). This lack of self-esteem is then thought to influence the ability of women to make rational choices and behave 'responsibly'.

Alternative understandings of empowerment have been noted by Young (1994: 48): 'For some therapists and service providers, empowerment means the development of individual autonomy, self-control, and confidence; for others empowerment refers to the development of a sense of collective influence over the social conditions of one's life.' Young favours the latter definition of empowerment as it does not reduce the importance of context or accept inequalities. Young argues that empowerment consists of collective action of women with a goal of raising awareness or consciousness and changing their environment through their own collective social

action. She describes components which services could take on board to make their service models closer to that of her preferred definition of empowerment. In addition to providing opportunities for consciousness-raising, she argues that client involvement in service development increases the likelihood of empowerment being experienced. Young also states that the service should offer opportunities or links to 'meaningful work' which may be a job in the local community. This definition by Young does appear to be closer to realising meaningful choices for women, however, whether it is achievable for third sector organisations working within the constraints of short-term funding and in a criminal justice context, remains to be seen.

As the criminal justice system has a remit that prioritises punishment and risk, it follows that 'empowerment' is understood as a psychological feeling of being in control of events. If women then fail to make changes in their lives when faced with poverty or abuse then this can leave them disempowered (Pollack 2000). When autonomy is viewed as inherent within an individual then empowerment will be sought through methods that aim to increase feelings of self-worth and independence. Whereas when autonomy is viewed to be influenced predominantly by the environment and social relationships, empowerment will be targeted through advocating social change and critical thinking towards social issues (Pollack 2000).

Research by Carlen (2008) has demonstrated how services for women can struggle to be innovative when located in a punitive context. Drawing on the concept of 'imaginary penalties', Carlen (2008:1) demonstrated how a new women's prison in Australia claimed to be meeting objectives that in practice were unachievable. Carlen argues that in today's 'risk-crazed states of governance' imaginary penalties are present in policies and programmes that aim to meet public demands for reduction in crime and risk. As these demands are impossible to meet, imaginary penalties are evident when staff 'act as if' they can meet the objectives, for example, rehabilitation and reducing crime, while at the same time recognising that their objectives cannot be met due to external circumstances.

The prison which Carlen discusses in relation to imaginary penalties had excellent facilities and claimed to offer a therapeutic approach with a main objective of 're-integration'. Staff commonly viewed the rehabilitative goals which the prison was based on as unrealistic and unachievable. A key aim for the prison was to provide

programmes that would assist in the transition from prison to the community. However, staff revealed that these programmes would not work for various reasons. Many of the female prisoners were not sentenced (on remand) and therefore not eligible for programmes, the programmes had not been approved for use inside the prison and there were no follow-up programmes available for the prisoners after they left prison. In addition, the staff stated that even if further programmes were available for women after they left prison, the level of poverty, drug use and victimisation in the lives of the women meant that attending programmes would not be a priority. Staff in Carlen's (2008) study viewed women's offending on the outside as a survival strategy.

It followed that staff coped with these unrealistic objectives by working towards more informal objectives that they viewed as achievable: measure the satisfaction of prisoners and examine the processes involved in the programmes (Carlen 2008). Carlen noted that the contradiction between programme objectives and actual operations of the programme was unique as workers explicitly expressed that the programmes in the prison were not appropriate for their client group. However, workers did not report to funders that they were not meeting the actual objectives and instead working towards their own goals based on common sense and professional discretion. Carlen argued that practitioners working in the penal environment in recent times do acknowledge that they cannot meet the objectives of the government to address social problems with punishment, but they must 'act as if they are' (Carlen 2008:4). For example, the workers in Carlen's study 'acted as if they were' meeting objectives through designing programmes that they knew could not be used (because they were not working with sentenced women) and through planning for evaluations of 're-integration' which they knew did not exist. Carlen (2008) emphasises the impact this 'imaginary penalty' has on social and financial costs through influencing sentencing decisions and justifying the imprisonment of women.

Corcoran and Fox (2013) demonstrated how services that claim to be based on the needs of women and take into account their structural disadvantage can contain incompatible underlying theoretical assumptions. In their review of an evaluation of the Release Programme in the UK the authors explored whether community based sentences were in practice 'innovative' approaches to working with women. The Release Programme was a 'one-stop shop' directed towards women leaving prison, women with a criminal record or those perceived as at risk of offending. Activities at

the centre included one-to-one meetings with workers and group work. Staff in the study expressed views containing incompatible rationalities for providing support to women. For example, in line with neo-liberal ideology, the staff highlighted the personal responsibility of women and the importance of empowerment, but conversely they also emphasised the welfare needs of the women they worked with. Corcoran and Fox (2013) also found, similar to Carlen (2008) that workers operationalised their practice differently than that proposed by the official discourse due to the unrealistic nature of the official objectives. Drawing on governmentality theory, the authors questioned whether community based sentences were similar technologies of governance as those present in the prison environment. The authors suggested that the perception of community sentences as innovative may be misleading as they actually increase the number of women being criminalised and under state control through this 'governing at a distance'. Therefore, although the women in the study were not subjected to the control and surveillance of the prison, they did experience this via community sentences as the assumptions underlying these programmes remained focused on the goals of the penal system.

Policy and practice developments in Scotland

In Scotland, the recent report of the Commission on Women Offenders (Angiolini et al. 2012) recommended that a distinct approach should be taken when working with women offenders compared to men due to their differences in offence and sentence type, incidences of victimisation, rates of mental health and drugs problems and the likelihood of having dependent children. The authors also pointed to specific factors as 'stronger' predictors of offending for women including: 'dysfunctional' relationships; poverty/debt; drug abuse and immediate needs including accommodation, housing and welfare benefits. The authors claimed that by taking into account these factors and drawing on international evidence, the following components should be considered when working with women in the criminal justice system with the objective of reducing reoffending (Angiolini et al. 2012: 22-23):

- 'Effective interventions around thinking skills should be in place to challenge antisocial attitudes in women;
- Empathetic practitioners who develop good relationships with women offenders and provide practical and emotional support;
- A focus on motivation and providing women offenders with the confidence and skills to change;

- Holistic interventions rather than stand-alone interventions;
- Basic services need to be addressed before they will be ready to deal with longer-term needs such as education or employment;
- Mentoring¹⁰ as part of a package of interventions;
- Residential drug treatment if delivered alongside other programmes aimed at improving healthcare, child care and mental health issues;
- Interventions for women prisoners to forge and sustain positive and emotional bonds with their families; improving parenting skills can reduce substance misuse;
- Alternatives to court disposals especially for young people where they address offending behaviour and needs concurrently.'

Many of these components have also been recommended when working with men in the criminal justice system. In particular the importance of thinking skills is questionable in relation to women as there has not been sufficient evidence that cognitive behavioural programmes have an impact on women (Cann 2006 cited in Gelsthorpe et al. 2007). The report of the Commission on Women offenders also stated that all professionals who work with women in prison should have 'gender-specific training' (Angiolini et al. 2012: 10). The specificities of this proposed training are not clear, however the report did suggest that training would be related to 'dealing with problems associated with female prisoners, such as self-harm, poor mental health and addiction' (Angiolini et al. 2012: 67). This report should be commended for raising awareness of the issues women in contact with the criminal justice system face and attempting to improve conditions for women. However, many of the recommendations also focus on behavioural change of the individual and largely on working with women after they have been convicted. This most likely reflects the limitations of the remit within which the authors were working and again the difficulties with addressing the structural issues of women within the criminal justice context.

Internationally, a number of scholars have highlighted the necessity for gender informed approaches to challenge injustices that contribute to the criminalisation of women rather than focusing only on the individual (Goodkind 2009; Hannah-Moffat 2010). Services should not be labelled 'gender-specific' due to their concern with

¹⁰ Mentoring will be reviewed in detail, in Chapter 3.

needs that represent gender stereotypes (Henderson et al. 1998; Spjeldnes and Goodkind 2005). Services for women should not be based on a deficit model and the goal should not be about trying to 'fix' the woman, it should be about recognising the strengths of the women (Goodkind 2005). The label of 'strength-based' is not appropriate for a service that in practice operates in line with a deficit model. Goodkind (2005) suggested that services can attempt to address structural factors through providing opportunities for service users to influence social change. These opportunities might include services users representing their own communities in their goal for social change and the encouragement of critical thinking. Goodkind also noted the importance of incorporating the experiences and views of service users when designing and adapting services to ensure women are receiving a service designed to meet their specific needs and not based on assumptions about the needs of women offenders generally (Goodkind 2005). Kilroy et al. (2013) suggested that 'gender-responsive' policies in Canada are contributing to the continuing criminalisation of women, because they are legitimising the prison service through the development of 'therapeutic' services within prisons. They argued that support organisations for women should advocate with the women and on their behalf, for example through court processes, submissions to government inquiries and awareness projects aimed at challenging the stereotypes of women offenders that exist in popular culture.

In Scotland, the 218 Centre and the Women in Focus service have both been designed to provide women who offend with support that meets their specific needs. The 218 Centre, as previously discussed, has been described as 'gender-responsive' (Malloch et al. 2008). The service aims to reduce the number of women entering prison in Scotland and also to meet the specific needs of women. At the outset of the 218 Centre, in 2003, referrals were generally not made by sentencers as the service was not well known. During this first year the women who were referred were viewed as 'at risk' of reoffending in the long-term and in this way the service could be viewed as preventative. However, as the service has become better known, it is viewed more as a direct alternative to custody rather than a preventative measure and the number of self-referrals and referrals from welfare related agencies decreased (Malloch et al. 2008). Of 1163 referrals between 2007 and 2009, 45% came from the courts (sheriff/district/drugs courts) with the next most common referral source being criminal justice social work (16%), which is the Scottish equivalent of probation. There was a

significant reduction in the number of self-referrals from 2007 to 2009 from 22% to 8% of all referrals (Easton and Matthews 2010). Each woman worked with a key worker and gained support where required from various services including group work, alternative therapies, healthcare, emotional support and psychological and psychiatric services (Loucks et al. 2006; Easton and Matthews 2010).

In their evaluation of the 218 Centre, Loucks et al. (2006) found that women who used the service reported a reduction/stop to substance use and improved health and well-being. Easton and Matthews (2010), in a further evaluation, reported a number of positive outcomes of the 218 service for a cohort of women referred between June 2007 and May 2008. They found from data of 320 women, offences recorded by the police reduced by 21% following women's contact with the service. The qualitative component of their evaluation revealed that many women who had attended the service experienced improvements in confidence and self-esteem, improvements to substance misuse, physical and mental health. One of the key components of the service is the multi-agency approach that allows these different services to be offered in one location. The focus on substance misuse, positive relationships between clients and staff and the women-only aspect of the service is also viewed as key for the service (Loucks et al. 2006).

Although acknowledging that women who used the 218 centre valued the support they received, Malloch et al. (2008) identified some challenges with its operation. Multi-agency working meant that there was some confusion around roles. The context of the criminal justice system also had an impact on the service. The different organisations and funders involved in the 218 Centre had different objectives depending on whether they were a statutory organisation or voluntary organisation. The Scottish Executive Justice department (now Scottish Government) who funded the 218 centre were concerned with achieving value for money through diverting women from custody. This meant that priority was placed on referrals from criminal justice agencies rather than self-referrals and so it was less preventative. The focus of the support work with the women also changed focus due to these criminal justice related objectives. The service had initially focused on safety, connection and loss, however, Malloch et al. (2008) reported that offence related work was becoming more common by the end of the evaluation. Aftercare for women was reduced to 12 weeks whereas originally women were offered after care support for as long as they needed

it. The authors also identified the difficulties with evaluating a service where outcomes perceived as evidence of 'success' differ between organisations and individuals.

Challenges for the service were also identified by Easton and Matthews (2010) who highlighted outreach support to women in the community as a key area for development and in line with previous evaluations, a need to reach women who were at risk of being involved in the criminal justice system. Also noted by the authors was the potential reluctance of women without a criminal record to use the service, due to the stigma of being connected to a service that worked predominately with 'offenders'. Multi-agency working remained a challenge in the evaluation in 2010, in relation to accessing accommodation for women, contact with care managers¹¹ and the transfer of arrangements of women's methadone scripts. Despite these challenges that have been associated with the 218 Centre, the centre offers benefits for the women that are able to engage with the service, in that it offers a range of different types of support and services in one area and attempts to provide a safe environment for women. However, this approach needs to be widened before it can be expected to have an impact on the prison population, as it offers support to a small number of women, compared to the number of women in custody in Scotland.

An evaluation of the Women in Focus service based in South West Scotland suggested that intensive support helps women to address difficulties related to poverty, addiction and abuse (Burgess et al. 2011). Support workers and mentors helped women to engage with services related to accessing benefits and health services and resolving accommodation related problems. Women in this initiative were also supported to attend a group work programme and there was a focus on building confidence and self-esteem. Positive outcomes were reported for many of the women including: improvements in housing; improvements related to domestic abuse; increased access to benefits and health services; increased confidence, self-efficacy and self-esteem and reductions in reoffending (Burgess et al. 2011). Support workers had more time to spend with the women than criminal justice social workers and this was identified as a key component of the service. An important aspect of the relationship between support worker and service user was the ability of the worker to

¹¹ The role of the Care Manager was to maintain support for the woman in the community after she exited the 218 service. For women on statutory supervision, the Care Manager was a Criminal Justice Social Worker and for those without statutory supervision the Care Manager was provided by another statutory service.

provide practical support that allowed women to comply with court orders. Support workers also recognised a need to address circumstances related to the offending behaviour rather than the offence itself. The workers attempted to focus on the problems in the woman's life that had led to the offending, rather than talking about the specific incident of offending (Malloch and McIvor 2011). The women benefitted from the support, however the services could not overcome poverty for the women and was rather focused on helping women to cope with their difficulties. However, this is reflective of a remit, and the inability of a service located in a criminal justice context to significantly impact on circumstances of women when they have no power to make radical changes to social policy. This is particularly difficult in Scotland, where power for social security and welfare policy has not been devolved to the Scottish Government.

In a further review of the Women in Focus service, Malloch et al. (2014: 403) note the importance of understanding the difference between 'community' and 'community-based' interventions. When 'community' is used in relation to women in the criminal justice system, in practice it means that women are able to access the support of multiple agencies rather than feeling part of a community (Malloch et al. 2014). Although the Women in Focus service was community based, this did not necessarily equate to women being integrated to the community, as the communities in which the women lived lack resources in relation to employment, education, health and recreation. These are often marginalised communities which women do not feel part of before they are criminalised and communities in which many women have felt unsafe.

Dryden and Souness (2015) have recently evaluated 16 women's community justice centres (WCJC) that were set up in Scotland in response to recommendations of the Women Offenders Commission Report (2012) and were funded by the Scottish Government. The purpose of these centres is to supervise the requirements of statutory orders of women (where relevant) and also to provide 'holistic' support in areas viewed to be related to women's offending. The local community justice centres are multi-disciplinary and include partners from criminal justice social work teams, public sector agencies, third sector agencies, other local authority teams and community services such as education. These centres, therefore, offer access to many different services and activities. Although the centres can support women at all

stages of the criminal justice system, the majority of women who access them are serving community sentences, referred from courts or criminal justice social work. Fewer women are referred from custody, throughcare or early intervention. Women are offered individual support, group work and drop-in support. Individual support includes linking women into other services, accompanying women to appointments, providing an advocacy service with other services such as housing and welfare rights and children and family case conferences. Groupwork involves developing communication and interpersonal skills, conflict management skills and parenting classes. Trauma support and anger management are also offered and these are also linked to family support. Some WCJs provide mentoring support through contact with third sector organisations. Access to support from workers of other agencies includes nursing, housing or welfare officers.

The evaluation of the service by Dryden and Souness (2015) included interviews and focus groups with women who attended the centres, practitioners and partner organisations. The quantitative component of the evaluation involved a service user questionnaire and practitioner assessments of women across 14 outcomes when they entered the service and after six months or when they exited the service. This was based on 406 women who entered the service and 506 women who exited the service during a period of nine months. Two thirds of the women who attended the WCJCs during the time of the evaluation, were required to attend the centre as part of the statutory order, however this percentage varied largely between the different centres.

Engagement with services was an important outcome in which just over half of women made progress. Having workers from a range of different agencies in one location with flexibility around appointment times was viewed as important by women who attended the centres. Workers reported that providing outreach support through visiting women in their homes facilitated building relationships with women and helped them to access services. Finding safe housing for women was viewed by workers as an urgent issue to be addressed. Of the women who entered the service in unsafe and unstable accommodation, just over half made some improvement in their housing situation. There were also a small number of women whose housing situation worsened while they were in contact with the centres. Workers viewed this to be the result of circumstances such as domestic abuse, eviction or a returning to custody. Of 354 women who exited the community justice centres during the 9 months of the

evaluation period, 294 women were in safe and secure housing at the point of exit, while 36 women exited with unstable or unsafe housing and 24 women were homeless at the point of exit. Housing could be time consuming to secure for women, ranging from 2 weeks to almost 12 months. This is in the context of a housing crisis in Scotland more generally. In 2015, a report by the Commission on Housing and Wellbeing revealed that in Scotland there are 29,000 homeless people, 150,000 households on waiting lists, 73,000 households overcrowded and over 10,000 households in temporary accommodation. It is clear that housing is an issue for many people living in poverty generally and for those in the criminal justice system, these issues are likely to be exacerbated.

The centres helped women address a range of issues, however areas such as substance misuse, poverty, mental health issues and family issues could not always be addressed during the time women accessed the centres. One third of women exited the service with serious addiction issues, one in five women exited with serious money problems, and one in five women also exited the service with mental health problems (Dryden and Souness 2015). Many women entered the centres without interests or 'positive ways to spend their time' such as volunteering, training or employment and this was an area in which women did not make significant change during the evaluation period. Those women who had been able to experience positive changes in these areas reflected that it was as a result of having opportunities, belief and encouragement from others and feeling motivated. This highlights the importance of opportunities being available for women to spend their time in ways that they value. None of the women who participated in the evaluation expressed 'pro-criminal' attitudes and many women did not view themselves as offenders. The majority stated that offending was unacceptable, but some women remained of the view that offending was sometimes acceptable. The report did not include data about the types of offences committed by women who accessed the service, however offences related to marginalisation can be a rational response to circumstances in some instances, and a focus on changing attitudes rather than circumstances is likely to be unhelpful.

Funding and sustainability

Short-term funding is a common restriction for services aimed at women in the criminal justice system (Clarke 2004; Burgess et al. 2011; Angiolini et al. 2012; McDermott 2012; Dryden and Souness 2015). In their evaluation of community justice

centres for women with criminal justice system involvement, in the UK, Radcliffe and Hunter (2013) reported that funding was a key issue for staff and referrers to the service. Staff found it particularly challenging to develop and promote new services that may only be available for a limited period of time. They were also concerned about the time and resources that were spent on services that may be temporary. Short-term funding also affected the number of referrals to the community justice centres as funders were reluctant to refer to services that may not be able to support clients for the required period of time. The study also noted the negative aspects of increasing marketisation of the criminal justice sector in relation to competition for contracts. Government funding became available for voluntary organisations to provide services to women through community justice centres. This resulted in partnerships being formed between some voluntary agencies who had never worked together before and did not always have experience of working in the criminal justice sector. This resulted in a lack of clarity and disagreements about what the services should deliver, and also meant that services could be time consuming to set up. The importance of funding for retaining staff was highlighted in the research by Burgess et al. (2011) evaluating the Women in Focus service. Their findings also revealed that staff turnover had a direct negative impact on some women because their positive relationship with the staff member ended abruptly.

The recent evaluation of community justice centres by Dryden and Souness (2015) also reported similar issues with short-term funding. The 16 community justice centres were funded by the Scottish Government for a period of between 12 and 23 months, and following this were expected to develop a strategy for sustainability without further funding from the Scottish Government. Successful funding bids often depend on evidence that a service can achieve the desirable outcomes. Some workers in the evaluation reported difficulty with evidencing outcomes in such a short space of time. Concerns about job stability and the impact of offering a service to people when it may only be short-term, were also evident in this evaluation.

The competition for funding and scarcity of funding may lead to organisations adopting 'marketable' labels and descriptions. For example, there may be benefits for labelling a service 'mentoring' as following the report of the Women's Commission in Scotland (Angiolini et al. 2012) funding has been allocated to mentoring services because it is commonly viewed as a worthwhile service. A concept that can be

marketed in this way in the voluntary sector is even more valuable because it can be presented as separate from the statutory sector and the government. The voluntary sector is more likely to reach socially excluded individuals because of this perceived independence (Stacey 2012). When funding is limited for third sector organisations, having a service to offer that fits the current priorities of the government will influence how successful the organisation will be in gaining funding. A reliance on government funding also means that third sector organisations are less likely to challenge policies that are part of the government's agenda. Stacey (2012) also states that marketisation is problematic in the criminal justice context when the service users are not viewed as the customer: the funder and the 'law abiding public' are viewed as the customers more so than the service user. This can result in service users feeling let down by organisations that are argued to have their wellbeing at the focus of their agenda.

The increasing marketisation of services within criminal justice impacts upon the types of outcomes and metrics that are required in order to secure funding. For example, evidence that shows statistically significant impact is preferential. Even for a larger organisation like Together Women in the UK (a project that aims to divert women from custody through a 'holistic' approach), that receives a high number of referrals, a statistical analysis could only be used for simple analyses as the sample size was not large enough for a sound statistical analysis (Hedderman et al. 2011). The nature of the record keeping across the Together Women project also prevented a sound statistical analysis because of the differences in outcomes and support across all the locations of the project. Hedderman et al. (2011) also identified the difficulties associated with deciding what is viewed as a 'positive outcome' in a population of women with multiple issues relating to their marginalisation. This is related to defining the aim of the service. It is not always clear whether the service aim is to reducing reoffending or to address needs symptomatic of social exclusion. There is also the challenge of measuring the impact of 'holistic' services using statistics. If they are 'holistic' then this would suggest that improvements should be seen in a number of areas and not just a few. Smaller organisations will also not always have the resources required to input an evaluation system to measure outcomes in line with funder requirements (Stacey 2012). The requirements of funders will also determine which outcomes will be viewed as important. For example, local funders will have their own specific aims and agendas and this will be reflected in their requirements of the service they are funding (Gelsthorpe and Hedderman 2012).

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the circumstances and difficulties that women in contact with the criminal justice system often face throughout their lives. Specific issues such as victimisation, self-harm, family issues and experiences of stigma are often experienced disproportionately by women than men. These issues are intensified for many women after they leave prison because they are returning to disadvantaged environments and continue to experience marginalisation. The difficulties that women have experienced often reflect their disadvantaged position and poverty related difficulties. This is also reflected in the discussion of literature on desistance when it was those women with stable circumstances that were able to experience positive changes in their lives and did not need to commit offences. The research on desistance also highlighted the importance of agency for women. Although structural issues should be recognised and not minimised when supporting women in the criminal justice system, there should also be a recognition that women do have agency and are not passive powerless victims.

'Gender-specific' services based on the 'pathways perspective' have raised awareness of the issues that women in the criminal justice system face and have improved conditions for women in the criminal justice system. However, there is some evidence to suggest that these well intentioned services can minimise the structural issues for women due to a focus on individual factors which can be reflective of an organisational remit and the constraints of the criminal justice system.

Some services for women have focused on relationships, confidence and self-esteem as key issues related to offending reflecting an individualistic approach, concerned with responsabilising strategies and self-reform. There is some evidence to suggest that services contain mixed theoretical stances concerned with attitudes and behaviour of women but also concerned with attempting to fix problems in the 'system', through helping women to access their benefits, for example, and through providing emotional support, reducing social isolation. Encouraging women to 'self-reform' could have the impact of disempowering women if they go on to experience negative circumstances such as homelessness and abuse. Contradictions between stated aims of a service and actual practice can be problematic because funding and policy are influenced by the stated aims and outcomes.

It is clear that services which have been put in place for women have resulted in positive change for some women, as has been evidenced through qualitative accounts from women themselves. If services are viewed as 'working' by policy makers then assumptions might be made about what aspects of the service women benefit from. It may be the case that these services are helping some women because of their own focus on problems with the 'system' such as welfare reform (through helping women to access benefits/food banks/accommodation). If policy makers however believe positive changes are as a result of a focus on confidence, self-esteem and 'life skills' then this impacts funding of services and may prevent any changes to important areas of policy such as welfare, health and sentencing. Changes in these areas may facilitate services being able to support much higher numbers of women.

Short-term funding of services for women in the criminal justice system is an issue that impacts on a number of different areas. It puts pressure on staff to 'evidence' outcomes within a short period of time. It can cause stress and concern for staff who are unsure about their own job security and are also cautious about offering a service to women when they cannot provide assurance the service will be available longer-term.

It is necessary therefore to consider whether mentoring for women in the criminal justice system addresses the circumstances and issues of women which have been reviewed here. Understanding whether mentoring is based on an individualised approach or whether it goes beyond this (both in practice and theoretically) will provide insight into what mentoring can achieve for women in the criminal justice system. This may have an impact on the likelihood of long-term changes in the lives of women and also future policy and funding of projects.

Chapter 3 - Mentoring: A review of the literature

As a result of this renewed focus on women in the criminal justice system and the recognition that community services are more appropriate for women, recent funding has been directed towards 'mentoring' services. This raises questions about the suitability of mentoring for women and what assumptions underpin the service. This chapter will therefore explore the definitions, goals, processes and outcomes that have been associated with mentoring in the literature. The chapter begins with a review of mentoring literature in the criminal justice field generally, followed with a discussion of mentoring for women specifically. There is then a review of how social capital and social networks have been understood as related to mentoring and what the barriers might be to the development of social networks and capital. Literature around mentoring which involves volunteer and peer mentors, alongside the potential benefits and challenges of such schemes, is then considered. Finally, the recruitment and training of mentors is discussed as this has implications for the type of service which mentors can provide.

Overview of mentoring in the criminal justice system

Mentoring has recently become more prominent in the adult criminal justice system and has been expanded despite limited evidence of its effectiveness in reducing reoffending. Various definitions have been applied to mentoring, across different sectors and also within the criminal justice system. The recent report of the Commission on Women Offenders in Scotland (Angiolini et al. 2012: 26) defined mentoring as 'a trusted one-to-one relationship where practical and emotional support is provided by the mentor on a wide range of issues relating to offending behaviour.' A mentor has been defined as a role model (Newburn and Shiner 2006; Tierney and Grossmann 2000; Bateman 2008; Trotter 2011; Angiolini et al. 2012), a friend (Koschmann and Peterson 2013), a 'special' type of friendship (Brown and Ross 2010a) and a 'friend with boundaries' (Keating 2012). Colley (2003) argued that mentoring is more adequately defined by its uniqueness, rather than its function. For example, the function of a mentor might be described as: advise; support; empower; coach and/or role modelling, however Colley has argued that mentoring must have a distinct component that gives it added value compared to other services such as befriending. She argues that what makes mentoring unique, is the presence of an

ongoing relationship that is supportive and provides both instrumental and emotional support with a developmental component.

Many organisations define their mentors as volunteers from the community (Brown and Ross 2010a; Keating 2012; WIPAN 2012; Koschmann and Peterson 2013), while other organisations employ mentors as paid members of staff (Hucklesby and Wincup 2014). Some organisations have a preference for mentors who have similar life experiences to those they mentor, also known as peer mentoring (Boyce et al. 2009; Schinkel and Whyte 2012). A peer mentor will have shared experiences to the person being mentored and will use these experiences to provide support (Schinkel and Whyte 2012). Mentoring services within organisations can also differ to meet funding requirements related to geographical location. Local authorities based in different areas may have different service requirements. The differences in mentoring models present a challenge when identifying the impact of mentoring. Despite the variations in definitions and practices adopted within the mentoring process between organisations, there appears to be a number of themes that are common to all definitions of mentoring. It is a one-to-one, trusting relationship that offers practical and emotional support when working towards goals.

International research has explored the role of mentoring in the transition from prison to the community. Trotter (2011) explored the views of 'ex-offenders' who had participated in mentoring programmes in Victoria, Australia. These programmes varied slightly in their characteristics and processes. For example, in one programme, mentors were volunteers, with prisoners contributing to the selection of mentors. In another programme, mentors were on call 24 hours a day and provided most contact via telephone. Interviews with 29 women and 19 men who took part in the various programmes revealed that the clients were very satisfied with the mentoring service, with women slightly more satisfied than men. Women who were mentored were more focused on family issues and support needs, while men were more concerned with financial needs. This may have been indicative of an increased family responsibility for women, as they were more likely to be primary caregivers. Women also reported a higher number of needs being addressed, more frequent mentoring sessions and longer mentoring relationships.

Some clients in Trotter's study reported that mentoring had helped them reduce their offending behaviour, for example, one participant found employment through the support of their mentor, and another stated that their mentor taught them to be responsible for their own decision making and choices, however the author does not elaborate on this and so it is unclear what is meant by 'responsible for decision making and choices' (Trotter 2011: 276). Police records of the clients, approximately 30 months after they were released from prison suggested that reoffending had been reduced in the sample as only 10 clients (27%) had spent time in custody and a further 10 had an action recorded against their name. Trotter reported that for the general population of prisoners in Victoria, the recidivism rate was 35% within two years of release and 53% for those with more extensive histories of imprisonment. Although this suggests an improvement in reoffending, it is not a substantial difference in reoffending rates. The limitations of the small sample size and the ability of police records to accurately measure reoffending rates must be acknowledged when making claims about the impact on reoffending. For example, the reduced offending may have been evident among clients who had fewer issues before entering the programme.

A UK study by Hucklesby and Wincup (2014) reviewed the findings of three studies that evaluated pilot mentoring projects in England, in which the majority of service users were male. In total, the studies they reviewed, interviewed 269 individuals involved in the projects, 56 of whom were mentees and 65 mentors. The remaining participants included other paid staff involved with the projects, offenders who did not wish to be mentored and those who requested a mentor and were not matched with one. The authors also examined records containing information about mentoring activities. Many of the mentors involved in the schemes were volunteers but the study also reported that paid workers were delivering 'mentoring work' and were not only involved in the coordination and management of the service. This was due to the practical constraints on the mentors, such as work commitments or distance between their home and the prison. Paid staff also felt they were better equipped with the relevant skills and experience to carry out some of these tasks. Hucklesby and Wincup provided examples of projects in the review that undermined what the authors considered to be key components of mentoring, by focusing on management goals. They argued that confidentiality is a key component of mentoring and the requirements of volunteers in their study to report concerns about their mentees to paid staff undermined the nature of the relationship. The authors also questioned the

use of reports and outcome measurement as part of mentoring, due to the lack of clarity around how this data would be shared and whether this would undermine the confidentiality of the mentoring relationship. The small number of participants (less than 1% of those who enrolled on mentoring programmes) who met with their mentor over a longer period of time valued the high level of support and the relationship with their mentor.

Mentoring of women

Research focusing specifically on mentoring of women in contact with the criminal justice system has noted the importance of positive relationships in the lives of the women. Brown and Ross (2010a) undertook a qualitative approach with women leaving prison in Australia and their mentors. These women participated in the Vacro Women's Mentoring Program. This scheme originated in 2004 and paired women in prison with volunteers from the community. The mentoring relationships began in prison, at least three months prior to release and only women who agreed and signed the referral form were considered to be eligible for the programme. Women who were on community orders could also self-refer or be referred by a case manager. Those women who were viewed as 'high risk' were not deemed eligible for the programme, with 'high risk' women defined as those with mental health concerns or a history of violence, who were assessed as posing a risk to the mentor's safety. The mentors and women built relationships inside prison and continued to meet for several months after release. The mentor provided a range of services including: driving the mentee to appointments, assisting in the completion of job applications, accompanying them on shopping trips and going for coffee. The majority of pairs would meet weekly either in person or through telephone contact depending on the individual preference.

Brown and Ross (2010a) reported that many of the women interviewed had rarely experienced a positive relationship before, and gained confidence and self-belief through engaging with a mentor. It is not clear whether increases in confidence and self-belief were associated with changes in circumstances in the lives of women (that the mentor may have facilitated) or due directly to the emotional support of the mentor.

Many of the women who initially signed up for mentoring never attended any appointments and women with less severe drug and alcohol problems and fewer

offences were more likely to engage with a mentor. It is possible that these women, with fewer barriers to overcome would have been much more likely to engage with mentors and not reoffend, even without the support of a mentor. It is important to define the barriers to the uptake of mentoring to ensure that the service is directed towards those who can benefit from the service. It may be the case that the women who never signed up for mentoring were the group in need of support from mentors and the women who did sign up would have been less likely to reoffend in the first place. Despite mentoring providing beneficial support to the small number of women who engaged with a mentor, the high number of women who did not engage after the first meeting raises questions about the suitability of mentoring for the majority of women in the criminal justice system. Older women with shorter criminal histories and less severe drug and alcohol problems were more likely to engage and continue in a mentoring relationship. Despite the correlation between short criminal history and retention in the programme, some of the longest mentoring relationships were with women with very long criminal histories. The women who engaged with the programme stated that they did so because they predicted that they would otherwise be socially isolated upon leaving prison (Brown and Ross 2010a). Brown and Ross concluded that there are a number of conditions that must be met for women to be ready for mentoring. The mentee must understand the processes and recognise the value of mentoring, she must believe that she needs a mentor to help her adapt to the community post-release and must have a lifestyle that allows for a mentor.

Salgado et al. (2010) also explored the views of women participating in a mentoring programme specifically for women in the U.S. The Rhode Island Women's Mentoring Program matched women soon to be released from prison with mentors from the community based on age, background, interests and geographical location. Women were only accepted onto the programme if they displayed adequate levels of motivation. Mentors would then meet with women in prison on a weekly basis. The women who continued to meet their mentors after release from custody would participate in activities such as sharing meals, going shopping or going for coffee. Women reported feeling particularly vulnerable immediately before and after release, highlighting the need for a mentoring relationship to begin while in prison. Commitment from mentors even after relapse (from drugs or alcohol) was found to be an important component of this mentoring model. Mentees valued the service because it was women only and one on one.

Salgado et al. (2010) viewed the relational aspect as the key component of mentoring, emphasising relational theory as the underlying framework of mentoring. The authors viewed it as an opportunity for women to build a positive relationship with someone outside of prison. They highlight the importance of mentors being strong female role models who offer a different 'perspective' and are a source of support. This study emphasised key time points when mentoring was viewed to be valuable and the most necessary components of the model in the views of the service users. However, it does not provide substantial support for the claim that mentoring leads to a reduction in reoffending as this was not evaluated. The study suggests that the mentor is providing the role of a friend and emotional support rather than practical support, as the activities were more sociable than practical. It is questionable whether activities such as shopping trips and coffee meetings can address the issues of women who offend such as mental health problems, financial concerns and employment/training. This may account for the low numbers across the literature who engage with mentoring consistently.

A recent evaluation in Scotland explored the process and outcomes of a mentoring service for women that was part of a Public Social Partnership, consisting of a number of agencies in the voluntary and statutory services (Ipsos Mori 2015). The evaluation, based on qualitative and quantitative data, reported that positive short-term and medium-term outcomes were achieved in the following areas: women believing they can change; readiness to work on problems; solving everyday problems; leisure/constructive use of time and money (including benefits). This study also revealed that many women disengaged with mentoring. From 418 closed cases, 38% had not engaged with a mentor (18% had never met with a mentor and 20% had only one meeting). Of the remaining 62% the majority (40%) had engaged for only two months or less, and only one quarter had engaged for five months or longer. However, meeting with a mentor more than once was viewed as positive engagement by the evaluators.

Of the 259 cases where women had engaged with a mentor more than once, almost half were unplanned exits, however the authors stated that this should not always be viewed as negative as there could be various reasons for exit. Sixty-four mentees also completed exit surveys, of whom 62% reported improvements in housing and money, approximately 50% reported improvements in alcohol or drug problems or family

relationships and 23% reported improvement in work, education or training. However, results from exit surveys should be treated with caution as a large proportion of women who have used the service do not complete the surveys. Similar to the study by Brown and Ross (2010a) many women did not engage with the mentoring service and it is questionable whether an engagement period of only two months is 'mentoring' or only crisis intervention. It is unlikely that this model of mentoring offers an ongoing relationship with a developmental component, that Colley (2003) argued is the unique component of mentoring, because a large proportion of women engaged with their mentor for only a short period of time. There also seems to be a focus on quantitative measurements of attitudes and behaviour, it is not clear how circumstances of women have been taken into account in the evaluation process.

This study by Ipsos MORI (2015) was part of a wider evaluation which included all mentoring schemes for women and mentoring schemes for 'prolific' young male offenders (Mulholland et al. 2016). The wider evaluation also found that outcomes that showed most improvement were areas related to attitudes and motivations. There was less evidence of improvement in areas which might be considered as key issues of mentees, including: family; accommodation; work or education and substance use. The full evaluation showed that of those who engaged with mentoring for 5 months or longer, just over 50% made progress on at least one outcome. However, this suggests that 43% of mentees did not make any progress on any outcome after 5 months, suggesting that mentoring may not be beneficial for a significant number of those people who are referred to the service or it may reflect limitations with the evaluation tools.

Sign-posting to other agencies was a common aspect of mentoring with 74% of mentees being referred to other agencies. These agencies included: financial assistance; drug/alcohol services; employment/education; healthcare and accommodation. Mentoring included many different types of activities and could include all or any of the following: one-to-one meetings with their mentors; practical support such as accompanying mentees to other agencies; help with producing CV and groupwork. The content of the meeting also varied depending on the person being mentored but might include discussing relationships, financial situation, training and employment goals and views on offending. Frequently, meetings were not around a specific topic but consisted of an informal chat between the mentor and the mentee.

Issues with role definition were also noted, with organisations advised by The Scottish Mentoring Network to describe their service as a ‘mentoring approach’. Staff perspectives varied on whether mentoring included intensive practical support, with some respondents viewing this as outside of a mentor’s role and those that needed this support were not ready for mentoring. Others viewed this intensive practical support as facilitating the development of a trusting relationship with the mentee and as an opportunity to model behaviours. As discussed in Chapter 2, there are benefits to labelling a service ‘mentoring’ as this can attract funding for a service that is currently favoured by the government or other funding sources. However, if mentoring is not understood by policy makers as including all the components mentioned, then the level of support that women receive through mentoring may be under estimated.

Social capital and social networks

The mentoring projects for women, referred to in this chapter have highlighted relationships as a key aim and rationale for mentoring, identifying the mentor as an opportunity for women to experience ‘positive’ relationships that they have often not experienced in the past (Brown and Ross 2010a). Relationships and social networks are linked to the concept of social capital, which has been associated with desistance, and which some authors have claimed is important within mentoring (Brown and Ross 2010a; WIPAN 2012). Pierre Bourdieu (1986) offered one of the earliest definitions of social capital as ‘the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition’¹². Social capital has also been defined as ‘the resources that inhere within social networks and relationships’ (McNeill 2009). Social capital and social networks have been viewed as key benefits of mentoring (WIPAN 2012; Brown and Ross 2010a) that are thought to be gained through relationships with mentors and the development of new connections and relationships.

Employment and family relationships are arguably key areas that can lead to the development of social capital for people who have been in prison or have a criminal record. A study by Farrall (2004), introduced in Chapter 2, explored the experiences of 200 individuals on probation in England and Wales and reported that friends and

¹² This thesis will focus on how social capital has been adapted in the grey literature around mentoring, as there is not space to discuss social capital in-depth here.

family were the most common routes to employment for offenders. Farrall (2004) presented examples of individuals who had gained employment through their father, and had therefore accessed social capital in this way. Farrall also reported instances when probation officers telephoned family members of their 'client' directly and requested their support on behalf of the individual. However, the author acknowledged that while family of origin was the main source of social capital for the individuals on probation, their own disadvantage was such that they did not have significant resources to offer the person on probation. This represents the wider economic environment for the individuals on probation, and highlights the limitations of a focus on social capital for tackling the deeper rooted issues such as poverty.

This operationalising of social capital in the criminal justice context may not be applicable to women who are often socially isolated, receiving welfare benefits, in low paid employment, or unable to work due to poor health. Employment is often not an immediate priority for women who have mental health problems, or are caring for children. It provides opportunities to form friendships and avoid peers associated with offending, however if women are the sole caregivers for their children they will not have the same number of employment options as men, and this limits the networks that are available to them. It follows that social capital is gendered because women generally do not have the same access to social capital as men.

Brown and Ross (2010b) utilised social capital as a basis for mentoring and drew on the definition put forward by Farrall (2004): taking in all the 'social interactions between individuals and other groups and individuals' (2004:61). Two different types of social capital were argued to be present in the mentoring relationship. Firstly, social capital could take the form of direct emotional support from the mentor for socially isolated women. In addition, Brown and Ross (2010a) argued that the 'social status' of the mentor could also offer social capital: 'it was the social status of the mentor as a pro-social person with deep roots in the pro-social community and civil society that provided benefit' (Brown and Ross 2010b: 220). These different forms of social capital are loosely based on concepts put forward by other authors. Putnam (2000) described them as bonding and bridging social capital. Bonding social capital is exclusive and relates to ties between family and close friends, as these groups of people normally share social and economic backgrounds. Bridging social capital is arguably inclusive, referring to connections with acquaintances and is more likely to be measured through

contact with people outside of family and friends. For example, it may include connections to voluntary organisations and educational contacts, often with people of differing social and economic backgrounds (Putnam 2000) i.e. those people of differing social classes. Briggs (1998) made a similar distinction between two forms of social capital: social support and social leverage. Social support was similar to bonding social capital and included small cash loans, transport and emotional support. Briggs stressed that emotional support such as the availability of someone to confide in was often equal in importance as practical support, highlighting the importance of social support for the 'chronically poor' to help them cope with circumstances. Social leverage was defined as networks of weaker ties that allowed individuals to 'get ahead' or increase their access to opportunities.

Although Brown and Ross (2010a) did not define their understanding of social capital in the mentoring context as 'bridging social capital' their reflections were comparable to the concepts introduced by Briggs (1998) and Putnam (2000). Similar to the concept of bridging social capital Brown and Ross described how the women who accessed mentoring in their study benefited from advocacy behaviours such as providing housing references and speaking on their behalf at court because of their 'respected' position in the community. The authors refined the definition of social capital as a concept that 'reflects the depth and extent of social bonds, connections and ties as well as the embeddedness of individuals in relationships of trust and their integration into the participatory structures of civil society' (2010b: 220). Brown and Ross (2010a:44) found that 'role-modelling' did not adequately describe the mentoring relationship. However, they argued that mentors used their own social and cultural capital to model 'prosocial thinking styles and behaviours' for women. For example, they reported that some mentee respondents had learned how to think about problems differently due to the 'pro-social' influence of their mentor. They argued that this capital leads to psychological change in which the woman will realise a new identity partly due to the support of the mentor and the way that the mentor views the mentee. This suggests that a key problem area for the mentees is their thinking style, which denies the importance of context (Carlen and Tombs 2006).

Studies outwith criminal justice, involving participants who are living in poverty have highlighted some of the barriers to making these bridging social networks. For example, Warr (2006) interviewed women living in socially disadvantaged areas in

Australia about the social support they received from family and close friends living in the same neighbourhood. Many of the women were single parents and relied on assistance from friends and close family in the form of small loans, food and emotional support. The majority of women were reliant on welfare benefits for their income. Social capital was limited to contacts living in the same area and it was very rare for anyone in the study to have a contact outside of their neighbourhood. Some women in Warr's study who did not have family living in the local area reported feeling isolated. As their friends were in a similarly disadvantaged economic position, they did not feel they could ask for assistance. Although there was limited evidence in Warr's study of access to bridging social capital, the author did provide an example of a participant who accessed a potential bridging network via a voluntary organisation. This particular woman coordinated community groups through working with the local school, although she was initially discouraged by the headmaster. Her voluntary work provided her with opportunities to create bridging social capital, however she did not have the economic resources to utilise these opportunities. For example, she could not afford to pay the membership for a social club that she encountered through her volunteering contacts. Therefore, the majority of women in Warr's study accessed bonding social capital and did not have access to bridging social capital. Warr's study also suggested that in order for women in marginalised communities to create bridging capital, not only do they need access to opportunities but they also need to overcome discouragement from others in their attempts to improve their situation.

Another study based in the U.S. by Dominguez and Watkins (2003) found that non-government agencies offered social support to women on low incomes, however, only a small number of women were able to access what might be understood as bridging social networks/capital i.e. ties outside of their local social networks that lead to improvements in their circumstances. Dominguez and Watkins reason that employment location and type were vital for women to establish connections outside of their existing social networks to achieve social leverage (social leverage was similar to an improvement in economic circumstances or socioeconomic status). For example, when the job was located in a middle class community, the authors reported that women were able to interact with professionals and this provided role-modelling opportunities. Social leverage was evidenced in the study as access to employment or higher paid employment in affluent locations. This implies that in order for women from working class communities to have access to higher paid jobs they must conform

to the behaviours of middle class individuals. The authors also provided an example of a woman who secured a low paid job. Through contacts with her colleagues (who were university educated and therefore constitute bridging ties) she was then able to access employment training programmes but was still unable to gain higher employment. This suggests that opportunities for bridging social networks do not always lead to bridging social capital, i.e. increased resources/benefits. It seems that is not always sufficient to have contacts with individuals if meaningful opportunities do not exist. It may also have implications for confidence and self-esteem to invest in these training programmes, and then not gain any benefits. Many women in the criminal justice system do not have significant employment experience or education and have physical and/or mental health problems meaning they are not fit for work. If employment is not an option for these women in the near future then it seems there are limited opportunities for them to gain any improvement in their circumstances without wider structural changes.

Volunteer and peer mentors

A key feature of many of the mentoring services reviewed was the use of volunteers as mentors. Volunteers have been highlighted as having the potential to provide mentoring support to women who offend in Scotland (Angiolini et al. 2012) and are increasingly being utilised by third sector organisations to provide services such as mentoring during a time when resources are limited and frequently being directed to those who pose a 'higher risk' to society (Brown and Ross 2010a). However there is also research that suggests a significant involvement of paid workers, even in mentoring schemes that claim to be run by volunteers (Hucklesby and Wincup 2014). Although volunteers are commonly used in the criminal justice system, there has been little research undertaken to show the impact of volunteering.

Benefits of volunteering have been reported for both the volunteer and the service user in the criminal justice system. For the volunteer these have included: learning how to accept others without judgement, (Paine et al. 2007) forming friendships and increasing knowledge (Futures Unlocked 2011), making a contribution to the community and feeling better about themselves (Morrow-Howell et al. 2009). Service users have reported increased confidence and self-esteem because volunteers challenge the negative view they hold of themselves (Jarman 2012). Volunteers are generally seen as genuine and caring by service users because they are not paid to

work in the role (Jarman 2012). There are arguably additional benefits for the wider community of volunteer mentors in addition to the potential direct cost saving. Volunteers can challenge the views of others in the community about prisoners, increase awareness and reduce stigma (Jarman 2012).

Wilczynski et al. (2003) interviewed stakeholders of mentoring projects for young people in Australia and found arguments for and against the use of volunteers. Paid mentors were preferred by some respondents because they were viewed as more accountable and committed than a volunteer mentor. A paid position also attracted a wider choice of applicants who came from a range of backgrounds. However, a number of stakeholders noted a key benefit of volunteers as a source of positive reinforcement for the young person who already had many paid workers in their life. However, in the sample of women in the present study it is likely to be problematic to focus on self-esteem and confidence at an individual level as key outcomes because circumstances such as poverty, abusive relationships and addiction are often the main problems in the lives of these women and their low self-esteem is a result of these experiences and circumstances. In addition, the multiple issues experienced by women in the criminal justice system, as described in Chapter 2, may result in an extremely challenging role for a volunteer that could lead to low morale. That is not to say that women in the criminal justice system will not benefit from having relationships with volunteers, but they may not be able to engage with a volunteer mentor while their circumstances are 'chaotic.'

There is also the question of whether volunteers within the criminal justice system have added value if they have a history of offending, and therefore provide an example of someone who has overcome barriers and reached their goals. In this case, there are likely to be additional barriers to volunteering. Disclosure Scotland¹³ checks can be lengthy for volunteers with a criminal record. A report by the Institute for Volunteering Research (2004) in the UK suggested that very few organisations had taken steps to involve 'ex-offenders' in volunteering, although they had addressed some of the barriers for other minority groups. When the barriers were overcome and those with a criminal record did volunteer, they experienced benefits such as a reduction in social isolation, the acquisition of new skills, increased employability,

¹³ Disclosure Scotland is an agency of the Scottish Government, that provides criminal records disclosure services for employers and voluntary sector organisations.

increased confidence and satisfaction of helping others. People who have offended who have received volunteer mentoring have been divided on their preference for a mentor with a similar offending history i.e. a peer mentor (Brown and Ross 2010a). In the study by Brown and Ross (2010a), some women viewed a peer mentor as necessary for best practice while others preferred to have a mentor with a dissimilar background, allowing them to separate completely from a criminal identity and lifestyle. Other barriers to volunteering in general include: a lack of knowledge about the benefits of volunteering; low confidence; fear of being judged by others within organisations; lack of knowledge of volunteering opportunities available and inability to meet costs of volunteering such as travel costs.

Literature on peer support in the mental health sector has suggested that there are numerous benefits of peer working including income, skills that aid recovery, supervision, improvements in self-esteem and a work environment where clients can be open about their past experiences without fear of being judged (Repper and Carter 2011). Clutterbuck (2012) highlights the advantages and disadvantages of mentors and mentees having similar backgrounds and experiences. Although peer mentors can empathise with the mentee they can also find it difficult to view the situation from a different viewpoint. Two people will never react to a trauma in exactly the same way, and so assumptions should not be made about how the mentee feels. A peer mentor may also still be experiencing their own issues and require support themselves. Therefore, it has been argued that only peer mentors who have overcome their own problems should be recruited as mentors (Schinkel and Whyte 2012). However, it is not clear how this 'stability' could or would be measured.

One project that recruited former prisoners to work as Life Coaches was the 'Routes Out of Prison' project based in Scotland. An evaluation by Schinkel and Whyte (2012) explored the value of this peer support through interviews with prisoners before release and post-release. Some service users reported that they valued the advice of the Life Coaches because they had an understanding that was based on their shared experiences of offending. Many service users reported signing up for the programme because they were seeking help with employment and did not state 'peer support' as their reason for doing so. However, for women, the element of peer support was more often reported as their reason for signing up for participation in the scheme.

There are several barriers to the implementation of peer support both in the mental health recovery sector and criminal justice settings including role definition; attitudes of staff and concerns with boundaries. A study by Mourra et al. (2014) explored experiences of peer workers in the mental health field. Peer workers who had previous histories of severe mental health problems (with or without substance abuse) were interviewed about their experiences. Self-disclosure and sharing of experiences was revealed as an important component of the relationship. However, this presented concerns about the maintenance of boundaries between peer worker and people they were supporting. Role definition was also an issue for peer workers. For instance, peer workers described situations where they were asked to collect fast food for a client, or attend meetings on their behalf when the client was not present. The relationships were similar to friendships and many continued the relationship after the official mentoring relationship had ended (Mourra et al. 2014). Peer workers reported blaming themselves and feeling anxious when their clients experienced setbacks or what they viewed as negative outcomes such as psychiatric or drug relapse. They did report increased feelings of self-worth when their client appeared to be living more independently and taking interest in activities and they felt that their experiences were worthwhile when they saw them benefiting their client.

Incorporating peer support into a system that is formalised and has monitoring requirements such as data collection can create difficulties for the peer worker and the client, as it has been argued that equal relationships are more important for peer support than a professional relationship between a service user and a worker, therefore the collection of data and recording of information about their interactions confuses the relationship and undermines the principles of the peer support (O'Hagan 2011).

Hester and Westmarland (2004) reported difficulties for one service that attempted to set up a peer support scheme for women who were involved in prostitution. The service was aimed towards women who wished to exit prostitution, and aimed to pair women with peers who had already exited prostitution. However, the service was adapted and the peer component was removed because only one volunteer came forward and there were not enough women available to be mentors who had stabilised their lives. The organisers reassessed the model and concluded that there may be dangers to placing the peer worker back in the environment she had exited.

However, they did have group sessions where women had opportunities to connect with peers (Hester and Westmarland 2004).

Generativity is a concept which may be associated with peer mentoring and has also been linked to desistance. Maruna (2001) interviewed 'desisters' who had not committed crime in over a year and 'persisters' who were actively involved in crime and did not express a motivation to desist. By taking part in generative activities such as volunteering or caring for others, 'desisters' felt that they were giving something back to society and their lives had purpose and meaning. Uggen et al. (2004) reported from interviews with people who had offended that the majority of respondents planned to contribute to the community in some way. For example, public speaking about their experiences related to offending was a common goal. Some respondents felt that it was their responsibility to make up for past mistakes through doing something 'good' for others. Women's traditional gender roles involve generative commitments such as caring for children and family. The use of custodial sentences for women who have dependent children may weaken desistance through separation from children. This denies women the ability to take part in a generative process. Generative acts and their association with desistance have implications for the recruitment of ex-offenders as mentors for women and would allow women who have benefitted from a mentoring relationship to 'give something back.'

Training and recruitment of mentors

The majority of literature around mentoring schemes for women in the criminal justice system suggests that female mentors are generally recruited for working with women and not male mentors (Brown and Ross 2010a; Keating 2012). The ability to engage with people has been viewed as a key requirement of mentors that is sought during the recruitment process and has been argued to be more important than the mentor being a 'peer' in the sense that they share experiences to those they mentor (Mulholland et al. 2016). Vacro Women's Mentoring Programme in Australia used a newspaper advert as a recruitment strategy and this prompted an unexpected high number of responses from potential mentors (Brown and Ross 2010b). The selection of mentors was based on desirable characteristics such as a non-judgemental attitude, patience, reliability and commitment.

The training that mentors receive has not been widely discussed in the literature, however it has been argued that mentors should be trained for at least 20 hours before they start the role (Brown and Ross 2010b). Mentors at Vacro Women's Mentoring Programme in Australia completed an Orientation Training module before they could be matched with a woman. This included training on: boundaries, mentoring using a strengths-based approach, addiction, mental health and communication skills. Mentors were also offered ongoing training (Brown and Ross 2010a; Brown and Ross 2010b). One of Vacro's important training objectives for mentors was to ensure that every mentor had knowledge of all services available to women within the prison and the community to ensure that appropriate referrals were made when required. This knowledge was vital in order to address the difficulties many women face when leaving prison. Although the mentor could not directly address all of these issues herself, the ability to sign-post to other agencies and make appointments was valuable. This was argued to promote effective partnership working between agencies.

The evaluation by Mulholland et al. (2016) stated that all new mentors received standard induction training that all members of staff within their organisation received and was not always directed specifically towards mentoring. This suggests that the mentoring role may not be significantly different to other support worker roles within organisations. The training induction also included shadowing of other mentors and those being trained valued the guidance from colleagues to a greater extent than the general induction training. The evaluation also revealed that of 123 mentors who were interviewed, they had received an average of 36 hours training in 12 months and training ranged from a half day to 5 weeks. Mentors also made some suggestions for areas of additional training including: training around disclosure of sexual abuse; mental health; domestic violence; legal highs; drug and alcohol awareness and motivational interviewing. This reflects the extent of the issues of people they were working with. Further exploration of the training that mentors undergo will contribute to an understanding of how the role of mentors is expected to address the issues of women in the criminal justice system.

Summary

The literature summarised in this chapter has clearly demonstrated a lack of clarity around the definition, role and theoretical underpinnings of mentoring. Although there

were some common components of mentoring such as a one-to-one relationship and working towards goals, the mentoring role appeared to encompass a wide range of activities. There was also disagreement between staff and organisations about the level of support that should be offered as part of mentoring. It may be that as a result of the increasing popularity of mentoring in the criminal justice system, the label 'mentoring' has been applied widely by organisations to increase their ability to secure competitive funding. A clearer understanding of mentoring in theory and practice is required to find out how mentoring aims to address the issues of women that were described in Chapter 2.

The relationship between the mentor and mentee was often emphasised in the literature, with relational theory being described as the underlying basis for mentoring services focused on women in the criminal justice system. Some studies argued that mentoring provided women with the opportunity to experience positive relationships for the first time and to 'practice' being in positive relationships. Also connected to relationships, social capital and social networks were cited as a basis for mentoring. Social capital was understood as resources that women could gain as a result of their relationship with the mentor. Examples of such resources included: 'pro-social thinking', connections to new social networks via their mentor and housing or character references. If 'bridging social capital' is a key benefit of mentoring and important in desistance, there is little evidence that this has been achieved to date in mentoring in the long-term and that it has led to significant changes in the lives of women. The current study will prioritise the perspectives of the women who have engaged with the Sacro mentoring service to uncover what the key aspects of mentoring are for women and whether this supports the literature.

Mentoring for women was valued by those who engaged with it consistently, this may have reflected the small number of women who were able to engage with a mentor and may have had less serious issues than many women in the criminal justice system. There was a lack of evidence that mentoring made significant changes to women's circumstances such as accommodation, family relationships or substance use, which may account for the high attrition rate in mentoring, described across the literature. Reducing reoffending was a key aim for many of the mentoring services, reflecting their location in the criminal justice system. Alternative measures of success, which account for the complex issues women face, may be more applicable

to mentoring and may reflect the impact of mentoring more accurately. The present study aims to uncover what measures of success are prioritised by the Sacro Women's Mentoring service and whether this is also reflected in the accounts of women who use the service.

Chapter 4 - Methodology

This study aimed to establish what the goals, processes and impact of mentoring are through adopting a largely qualitative approach which involved interviews with women who use the service, mentors and other stakeholders. This chapter provides a detailed description and reflexive account of the methods and analysis that were utilised in this study. Firstly, the chapter puts the research in the context of a feminist approach, followed by a discussion about the rationale for the methods selected. The practical aspects of the research are then described, followed by a discussion of the challenges of the research process. The chapter concludes with an account of the data analysis process that was adopted.

Feminist approach

A feminist approach was adopted in this study, focused on and prioritising the accounts of women in the criminal justice system with a consideration of gender in the research questions and analysis. There is no single definition of feminism, however, it is based on the view that women have been oppressed by patriarchy. Patriarchy has been defined as: 'a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women' (Walby,1990:20) Feminism can have different overall goals, for example, it can aim to reduce or remove gender inequalities, improve the position of women while still maintaining gender differences or it can have the radical aim of transforming gender relations and gender standards (Walby 2011). Despite the variations in its interpretation and theoretical stances, Gelsthorpe and Morris (1988: 94) state that 'At the very least, a feminist is someone who believes that women experience subordination on the basis of their sex'. A feminist approach to research, therefore, aims to examine and expose issues related to gender and power (Reinharz 1992).

I chose to take a feminist approach in this research because women in the criminal justice system are a minority population and the issues which many women in this population have experienced are related to gender inequalities. The criminal justice system has a specific impact on women, as discussed in Chapter 2. This thesis explored whether mentoring adopted a consideration of gender in its model, through examining whether the service offered an innovative approach, addressing the specific issues of women and was not a service based on men and then adapted for

women. There was a consideration of whether mentoring was in line with individualised approaches towards women that have been associated with controlling women through responsibilising approaches. If this is the case, then there is a denial of the impact of gender inequalities which are related to women being criminalised, in areas such as poverty, employment and physical/sexual abuse.

Feminist research aims to make visible the experiences of women and issues relevant to gender which have not been represented significantly in traditional social sciences research. There has been much debate surrounding feminist methodology and whether a distinct feminist methodology exists (Harding 1987; Reinharz 1992). Research in the social sciences has traditionally focused on male participants and then been generalised to women (Harding 1987). It has been argued that there is not one feminist methodology, and that it is an approach based on feminism, in that it seeks to expose how women are oppressed by a patriarchal system (Stanley and Wise 1983). The research topic that is selected should reflect this stance (Gelsthorpe 1990). The methodological approach should aim to contribute to social change for women through the use of knowledge produced using methods that aim to empower women through taking women's accounts of their lived experiences as legitimate sources of knowledge (Acker et al. 1983; Campbell and Wasco 2000). The quantitative positivistic methods traditionally used in research have been criticised because they do not reflect the experiences of women and have therefore misrepresented women (Westmarland 2001) with some suggesting that only qualitative methods can represent women's experiences adequately (Stanley and Wise 1983). Qualitative methods arguably allow the voices of women to be heard rather than quantitative methods that can silence women by putting their experiences into set categories (Campbell and Wasco 2010). Qualitative methods are better able to capture the meaning behind the behaviours of individuals who have complex life histories and circumstances, giving participants the opportunity to be listened to and taken seriously.

Although qualitative methods have historically been associated with feminist studies, quantitative methods can also be incorporated. It is not the case that qualitative approaches are always feminist and equally not all quantitative methods lack a feminist 'sensitivity' (Gelsthorpe 1990). Indeed qualitative methods also present limitations. For example, an interview approach may exclude women from the

research who do not feel comfortable participating in an interview. Some women may not be willing to reveal information about themselves in the direct interview situation, despite a shared gender with the interviewer. In this case, surveys have the advantage of being confidential and so information may be obtained that would not have been revealed in an interview situation (Kelly et al. 1994). Surveys can be used in feminist research to provide an overall picture of views representative of larger geographical areas than can be achieved with qualitative research methods (Gelsthorpe 1990). What makes a methodology feminist is not the methods specifically but how the methods are used by the researcher and the underlying epistemology (Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002). Feminist research is defined by the topic, rather than the choice of methods (Gelsthorpe 1990), in that the topic should be concerned with understanding the experiences of women and uncovering how gender inequalities have impacted on these experiences.

Rationale for methods selected

This study was jointly funded by the University of Stirling and Sacro, (the organisation that delivered the mentoring service) as part of a Collaborative Impact Studentship. It is important, therefore, to note that the methods selected were influenced by the involvement of Sacro. Prior to my acceptance on to the studentship, it was agreed between Sacro and the University of Stirling that the research would involve interviews with women who used the Sacro mentoring services, interviews with relevant staff and stakeholders and access to case file data. The impact of the involvement in Sacro on the research process will be discussed in relevant areas throughout this chapter.

In the present study the women who used the mentoring service came from marginalised backgrounds and, as women, were a minority in the criminal justice system. The social issues that are important and relevant in the lives of these women are likely to be too complex to be analysed solely through the use of quantitative methods. A statistical approach would not reveal the reasons why the mentoring service is viewed to be 'working' or 'not working.' A solely quantitative analysis, lacking the context of the women's lives, could lead to incorrect assumptions about the benefits or impact of the service (Hedderman et al. 2011). I anticipated that a qualitative approach would give the experiences of women in this study more visibility.

It aimed to give participants the opportunity to express their own opinion and perspective on their experiences of mentoring and the criminal justice system. The criminal justice system has been designed for men, with the consideration of women significantly lacking (Gelsthorpe et al. 2007; Angiolini et al. 2012).

In addition to women who use the service, a qualitative approach was also adopted with mentors, funders and other relevant staff with the aim of exploring information in more depth than would be available from a survey. It also allowed for a more detailed comparison of accounts between women who used the service and staff. There was also a small quantitative aspect to the study. This involved collecting data from casefiles and accessing data from databases. The purpose of this data was to complement the data gained from interviews and also to explore characteristics of a larger sample of women who had access to the Sacro mentoring service.

A control group was not included in this study for several reasons. A Home Office in 2005, drawing on guidance from Reiss (1987), suggests that a minimum sample size of 325 is required in order to detect an effect which can be judged as reliable (Harper and Chitty 2005). The number of women who have passed through the mentoring service at Sacro was not high enough to make these comparisons. Over time, there may be a large enough number of referrals to the service to take simple measurements but it would still be difficult to compare on other important factors because not all of the women who are referred will continue with the service (Hedderman et al 2011). It is also problematic to compare women who are mentored with a control group due to the factors behind the control group's reasons for not engaging. For example, if women who wish to be allocated a mentor are 'rejected' (or put on a waiting list) because they have been selected for a 'control group', this could have a negative impact on their motivation or confidence. It would not be comparing 'like for like.' Women in the criminal justice system are also often working with more than one organisation. This poses a difficulty for evaluating mentoring, as any outcomes which are observed may be the result of another intervention. The challenge of isolating mentoring for the purpose of an evaluation is difficult to overcome. The present study, however, goes beyond that of an evaluation of mentoring, in that the underlying basis of mentoring is explored through critical engagement with the mentoring process. An exploratory study is more appropriate to meet the aim of establishing the goals, processes and impact of mentoring.

Data collection tools

Interviews

Semi-structured, face to face, one-to-one interviews were selected as the main data collection tool to be used with service users of the mentoring service, mentors, funders of the mentoring projects, other relevant Sacro staff and other relevant social work staff. The interviews were not formally structured because this may have contributed to an unequal distribution of power within the interview as women would have had less opportunity to talk about issues not raised by the interview questions (Stanley and Wise 1983). One-to-one interviews with women can reveal the reality of their lives which have not been respected or taken into account (Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002) giving women the opportunity to put across their views and to be taken seriously and respected. Another advantage of using semi-structured interviews is their flexibility in allowing themes to emerge as the field work progresses.

Follow-up interviews with service users of the mentoring service were planned to take place six to eight months after the first interview. The aim of repeated interviews was to explore any changes in the lives of the women between the first and second interview and any impact of mentoring on their lives as they perceived it. Only two women participated in follow-up interviews and these took place six months after the first interview for one participant and 8 months after the first interview for the second participant. The lack of follow-up interviews was as a result of women being difficult to contact, or women agreeing to participate but then not attending the interview. The possible reasons behind this low number of follow-up interviews and the impact on the study will be discussed further on page 74.

Observations of mentoring

Observations of mentoring involved attending appointments with mentors and service users. These took place with the agreement of the Sacro mentor and service user prior to the appointment. The service user was asked again on arrival if they were happy for me to attend and observe the appointment. The aim of these observations was to gain an understanding of what mentoring involves.

Quantitative methods

Quantitative data was selected based on its availability. The women who were interviewed were asked if they were willing to grant me permission to look at casefile

data, in order to get an overall view of the mentoring process and the content of reviews. This information was collected where possible to look at changes over time during the course of the mentoring relationship and to gain an understanding of the type of data that was collected by staff. I was informed that information relating to women's mentoring was stored on databases. The information on these databases was taken from Homes Matrix paper forms and Key Performance Indicators (data was recorded on the database by staff members). The Homes Matrix was a tool used by the Sacro mentor with the service user as an aid to show their needs at first entry to the service and how these needs changed over time. This should have been used 2/3 times over the course of the mentoring relationship, according to Sacro staff. Service users were scored from 1-5 with 1=thriving, 2= safe risk , 3= stable, 4= at risk and 5= crisis on the following needs: housing; food, clothing, possessions; physical health; emotional health; sexual health; drug use; alcohol use; personal safety/risk; reducing reoffending; engagement with support agencies; social relationships; training, employment, motivation and (victim of) abusive/exploitative behaviour.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were used by Sacro to record statistical data about all of their services. Again, I anticipated that anonymised, recorded KPI data would be available for my research purposes. The KPIs recorded the following categories: referrals; cases closed; groupwork sessions; reviews; open cases; assessments; individuals sign-posted to another agency; individuals on waiting list; individuals assessed as suitable and exit needs assessments. This data was used to gain information about the needs of the wider population of women at Sacro. Although some of this information was available through casefile data, not all women granted access for me to view their casefiles (11 out of 20 women granted access). Also, KPIs included data relating to women who accessed the Sacro mentoring service more generally and were not part of the qualitative study. It therefore provided some information about the wider population of women who accessed Sacro, in addition to just those who were interviewed in the present study.

Access and recruitment

Official access was granted by Sacro as part of the studentship collaboration. In practice this meant I had permission to speak to staff and service users within the organisation, however service users could only be accessed through a gatekeeper at the operational level. This was due to ethical considerations which were defined in the

ethical review approved by the university ethics committee (discussed in further detail under 'Ethical Considerations'). Details of the research were communicated to senior managers of the mentoring projects via emails sent out by a Sacro Director, with follow-up emails by myself. I also attended a Senior Managers Meeting and delivered a presentation informing staff of the aims and practical details of the research. Unfortunately, only one manager involved in mentoring attended the meeting, however the presentation was forwarded by email onto those managers who had not been in attendance.

The next stage of the process involved meeting with staff that delivered and managed the mentoring services, to discuss the proposed research, including practical issues such as access and recruitment procedures. At these meetings, I requested that gatekeepers invite all women who currently accessed the mentoring service to participate in the research process. Although letters were sent to women who used the service, the gatekeepers advised that many of the women they worked with did not have a permanent address and therefore may have not received the invitation. Mentors also reported that many women did not open mail due to fears that it would contain 'distressing' correspondence. Due to this unreliability of invitations via letters, mentors also followed this up with a discussion about the research with the women (at their next mentoring appointment). The time between this meeting and data collection varied between Sacro offices. The mentors from the different mentoring services (Glasgow, Motherwell, Fife, Edinburgh and Falkirk) contacted the service users and invited them to participate in the research. Potential participants were provided with an information sheet and consent form (see Appendices 2-3) about the study and contact details should they have any further questions. If the women then agreed to participate, a time was arranged (through the Sacro mentor/manager) for an interview to take place at the Sacro office. Just over half of women who were invited to participate did attend an interview.

Staff were also informed at the initial meetings that it was my intention to interview staff about their mentoring experiences. Invitations to Sacro staff for interviews were communicated through email requests with an attached information sheet and consent form (see Appendix 4 for information sheet). I planned to have interviews with Sacro staff after the interviews with women using the service, however in practice this was not always the case. Due to the difficulty with recruiting mentees, this

encompassed a longer time period than anticipated. Therefore interviews with staff took place during the same time period. There was not sufficient time to wait for all interviews with mentees to be completed before starting interviews with staff.

Access to social work staff was not directly granted via Sacro. Sacro management provided me with contact details of the relevant social work staff. The social work staff recommended were senior social workers and those social workers that sent referrals for mentoring, to Sacro mentors. These were social workers that Sacro mentors worked with directly while both were supporting the same woman. In some cases I gained contact details for main grade social workers from senior social workers rather than through Sacro. Social work staff were invited to participate by email and attached information sheet and consent form.

The sample

The sample was purposive and selected from the Sacro offices that offered a mentoring service as detailed in Table 2. The participants were not equally spread across the different locations, reasons for which will be discussed under 'Challenges' of this chapter.

The interviews

Fifty interviews in total were undertaken between September 2013 and January 2015, lasting between 30 minutes and 80 minutes plus one written account. Although the interviews were semi-structured, I used an interview schedule as a memory aid, especially in the early stages of the research. After the first few interviews I became more familiar with the key topics to be discussed and the schedule was used if needed as a reminder.

The interview questions were informed by the literature review and experience gained through involvement in meetings at Sacro. The full interview schedule for women is attached in Appendix 5. Table 3 provides a summary of topics discussed for each participant type. The work of Ann Oakley has provided guidance on how interviews should be conducted and approached under a feminist framework (Oakley 1981). Oakley stresses the importance of a non-hierarchical relationship during the interview process and that the interview should be a two way process, where the interviewee

should be viewed as an equal. The interview itself must be carried out in such a way that the participant is free to tell their story (Oakley 1981; Westmarland 2001).

Table 2: Number of interviews completed at each mentoring location by type of participant

Qualitative Sample	Head Office	Glasgow	Lanarkshire	Fife	Falkirk	Edinburgh	Total
Interview: mentee		9	5	1	3	1	19
Second Interview: mentee		1	1	0	0	0	2
Written account by mentee		n/a	n/a	1	n/a	n/a	1
Interview: mentor (paid)		4	2	2	1	2	11*
Interview: mentor (volunteer)		2	1	0	0	0	3
Interview: Sacro senior manager	1	1	1	1	0**	1	5
Interview: volunteer coordinator (Sacro)	1						1
Interview: senior social worker (Funder)		1	1	1	0	0	3
Interview: social work staff		1	1	4	0	0	6
TOTAL:51							

* Three of the paid mentors had previously volunteered as a mentor and were able to provide a perspective of both roles in interviews. **Edinburgh and Falkirk were managed by the same individual so one interview covered both services.

Table 3: Summaries of topics in interview schedules

Mentee Interview Schedule Topics	Mentor Interview Schedule Topics	Funders/social work staff Interview Schedule Topics
Expectations of mentoring	Motivations	Definition of mentoring
Definition of mentoring	Definition of mentoring	Role of mentors
Mentoring sessions and relationship with mentor	Mentoring sessions and relationship with mentee	Expectations of mentoring
Volunteer mentors	Training and recruitment	Profile of women referred
Outcomes of mentoring	Outcomes of mentoring	Satisfaction with mentoring
Social capital (experiences in the community and relationships)	Experiences with other agencies	Development/changes to mentoring

Interviewing in line with a feminist approach generally ‘aims to be reflexive and interactive, take a non-hierarchical approach and avoid objectifying the participant’ (Ritchie and Lewis 2003: 140). I decided to adopt this approach as it seemed appropriate for my aims, in that I wanted to give women the opportunity to talk about issues important to them and not to be restricted.

Oakley (1981) argued that in feminist research, women should interview women as, due to their shared gender, they are more likely to construct in-depth knowledge from the research process. However the hierarchical nature of the interview process is not only influenced by gender but also by factors such as class, age, ethnicity, sexuality and global location so it cannot be assumed that a sharing of gender in itself is enough to remove power imbalances (Doucet and Mauthner 2008). Ramazanoglu (1989) discussed her research in the 1960s on female shift workers. She reflected that the women who participated in interviews were very aware of the class differences between themselves and the interviewer. Dominant public opinion at the time viewed the role of married women to be at home with their children and not out at work. The author noted that when the women in her study were questioned about childcare and domestic tasks, they were defensive and she partly equated this with a

recognition that she was of a middle class background. Ramazanoglu also viewed this defensiveness as a response to the power imbalance of the situation. She found that the lack of rapport and disclosure from herself made it very difficult to develop any kind of trusting relationship with participants. McDermott (2004) reported a similar influence of class on the influence of 'telling' lesbian stories. The working class women in her study were more likely than middle class participants to appear nervous in interviews and report feeling that their life experiences were not of value. She relates this to the pathologising of working class people and their experiences which have also been highlighted by Skeggs (1997).

It is difficult to address issues of class completely, and it is unlikely that the interview situation was completely non-hierarchical. As I am a university student, and many of the women were from disadvantaged circumstances with little education then it may have been difficult to overcome these class differences. However I attempted to reduce any inequalities of power and class differences by talking informally with the participants, dressing informally, asking questions in a conversational style and answering any questions that they asked. I also reiterated my limited knowledge of mentoring at Sacro and my student status, to attempt to negate any perceptions of myself as an 'expert' or as a 'professional.' This approach was more important for interviews with women who used the service than staff interviews. Information sheets also informed women that the findings from the study would be used by Sacro to inform the service, however it did not explicitly state that Sacro were funding the study.

Interviews with women who used the mentoring service were carried out in Sacro office locations. It was important that the women who were participating in the study were in an environment where they felt safe, and where they had the support of a professional that they knew, should they need it. Prior to the commencement of the interview, I talked through the information sheet with the women and asked her to sign the consent form if she was happy to proceed. Mentee participants were briefed on the research by a Sacro worker prior to the interview, and rarely asked any questions. The majority of women appeared comfortable with being recorded. One woman said that she felt a little self-conscious at the beginning of the interview about being recorded, and I offered to stop recording but she declined. At the end of the interview

she stated that she had forgotten all about the recorder and was speaking openly and relaxed. She also participated in a follow-up interview.

Follow-up interviews proved to be very difficult to arrange, mainly because women were often uncontactable. Attempts were made to contact women through staff and two follow-up interviews were carried out. These interviews were used to note any changes in women's experiences since their first interview (approximately six months). One woman who had agreed to take part in a follow-up interview was in custody at the time of the later stages of field work and therefore was not available to participate in a second interview. Another woman did not attend an arranged follow-up interview. The lack of follow-up interviews may have reflected the circumstances that women continue to face after a period of mentoring, e.g. financial difficulties, addiction or homelessness. This lack of a longitudinal exploration meant that substantial claims could not be made about changes over time. Follow-up interviews were then utilised as a means to providing more depth to first interviews instead of providing a longitudinal approach. The focus of the research was then directed to a greater extent towards exploring the aims and processes of mentoring. The lack of follow-up interviews therefore had a significant impact on my findings in that I could not make claims about the longer term impact of mentoring for women.

The majority of the women were relaxed and positive during the interview process and answered the questions with ease, often expanding on their answers without any prompting and offering their views on areas they had not been specifically asked about. Two of the women were happy to participate but were quite reserved during the interview, and gave short answers, coming across as a little nervous. In order to try and ease their nerves I avoided using the interview schedule, and tried to make the situation as informal as possible. One of these women explained that one of the significant changes for her since she started mentoring was that she was now less nervous about speaking to unfamiliar individuals, and therefore coming to the interview was in itself a positive experience for her. Another participant spoke at length and answered all questions, talking about other subject areas that she felt were relevant; however she frequently apologised for not answering the question asked, and not being clear in her answers. I reassured her that she was talking clearly and the questions were only to be used as probes as I was interested in everything she had to say. I also reminded her that the interview could be stopped at any time.

However at the end of the interview she appeared happier and stated that taking part had helped her take her mind off other concerns.

McDermott (2004) also found that some of the women she interviewed were hesitant and nervous in their responses and unsure why their story should be of interest, asking for reassurance that they were saying the 'right thing.' However only a small number of women in the study appeared nervous, and many talked at length. This may be due to the experience that many of the women had in talking to professionals through their contact with social workers and the criminal justice system generally. Whilst every effort was made to make the women feel comfortable and not an 'object' of knowledge, many of these women had been telling their stories to the criminal justice system for many years and may have viewed this as another case of telling their 'story' to a stranger.

At the end of the interview, after switching off the recorder, I explained again, the purpose of the research. The women were also given a 'Thank You' card and a £10 gift voucher as a thank you for participating. One woman requested to write about her experiences rather than be interviewed. She was provided with the topic subject headings from the interview schedule, and asked to document her experiences and views on mentoring.

Interviews with Sacro staff were also undertaken within the Sacro offices. The majority of social work staff were interviewed in their own offices, with one conducted at the Sacro office. There were only two mentors (out of 14) who were invited to participate and did not. One mentor declined to participate via an email from her supervisor. Another mentor who had agreed to participate was very difficult to contact. After several attempts to arrange a date, and limited contact it was decided not to pursue this interview.

Senior social workers were asked to participate in interviews as representing the funders of the mentoring projects which were funded by the local authority. Main grade social work staff were also recruited to share their experiences of working with the Sacro mentoring service. Contact details for the relevant social work staff managers were gained from Sacro staff in the first instance. These social workers were representative of 'funders.' These managers provided contact details of some

main grade social workers. They were invited to participate via email, and only two social workers did not respond to the initial email or a follow-up email. However, there were no social workers from the Edinburgh or Falkirk areas meaning that the views of social workers in other areas could not be taken as representing these areas. Their views were incorporated with the aim of strengthening the research through the inclusion of a perspective external to Sacro.

‘Embedded’ researcher

Embedded research in the present study is best described by the definition offered by McGinity and Salokangas (2014):

‘Embedded research describes a mutually beneficial relationship between academics and their host organizations...The relationship typically provides the researcher with greater access to the host organization with benefits for collecting data and research funding. For the host organisation the relationship provides a bridge to academia and academic knowledge, networks and critical approaches to developing organizational policies and practices.’

This collaboration with Sacro had implications for different aspects of this research study. The research topic and methods were decided by Sacro in collaboration with the university, prior to my commencement of the studentship. Access to women was also determined by Sacro. Therefore, the project was restricted only to the Sacro Women’s Mentoring Service.

The collaborative and ‘embedded’ nature of the PhD studentship allowed me to gain additional insight into the organisation and contribute to processes within the organisation. For example, I attended regular ‘Women Offenders Group’ meetings where staff would meet up and discuss day to day experiences of working with women and also wider Sacro policy issues related to women. This was of benefit because it allowed me to develop relationships with some of the mentoring service workers, which aided the recruitment process. It also supported the development of the interview schedule, as I was able to learn more about the day to day challenges for the service users and the workers. I was also asked to contribute to some aspects

of tender applications, by providing short literature reviews in the areas of mentoring and to provide feedback on service documents, such as evaluation frameworks.

Progress reports were provided to Sacro every six months detailing the status of the research. Meetings also took place between the non-academic supervisor at Sacro, myself and two academic supervisors allowing for a discussion of any issues relating to the research. I also had a small number of additional meetings outwith the joint supervision with the Sacro supervisor. Again this was to provide updates on the research specifically and also information about work I was doing for Sacro outside of the PhD specific research.

In addition, I observed mentors and women who were mentored, on 3 occasions to appointments with service users. The mentors had agreed this with women involved before the visit. The purpose of these observations was to increase my understanding of the mentoring process. Notes were not taken and this was not part of the formal research process. However it did help to inform the interview questions. It also allowed me to develop relationships with gatekeepers and provide them with additional information about the aims of the research, thereby aiding the recruitment process.

The expectations of Sacro in relation to the research findings are important to consider. It could be argued that their financial contribution was motivated by expectations of gaining 'evidence' that mentoring did lead to 'positive outcomes' i.e. outcomes viewed as favourable by Sacro's funders. Indeed, when introduced to present an update of my research at a Sacro meeting this study was described as being initiated because there was little research that evidenced that mentoring did 'work.' However in my regular meetings with the supervisor from Sacro there was encouragement and reassurance that Sacro were interested all findings relating to the mentoring process and impact.

It should also be noted that I had previously worked for the Sacro in an administrative role. In my prior role as administrative assistant at Sacro, I was located in the 'National Office'¹⁴ and therefore my contact with practitioners had been limited to telephone calls, email contact and occasional face to face contact at meetings.

¹⁴ Service users and practitioners did not generally attend the national office.

Consequently I did not have a significant prior relationship with gatekeepers. I generally found that this did not affect the research process. However having worked on a project group with some of the gatekeepers previously, may have facilitated the recruitment process in that having already developed a relationship with some of the gatekeepers may have eased access to service users.

Ethical considerations

A detailed ethical review of the project was submitted to the ethics committee of the School of Applied Social Science at the University of Stirling. Informed consent is one of the key components of an ethical study. As recruitment of women who used the service was largely controlled by gatekeepers then it was necessary to ensure that women who took part in the service were interested in participating and were not coerced into the interviews through pressures from their Sacro workers. Ethical considerations are important when reflecting on the role of gate-keepers. Their role as gatekeeper allows them to have power over who is given the opportunity to consent. As noted by Miller and Bell (2002) the researcher is not always the key decision maker in issues surrounding access, particularly in situations when the potential participants are viewed as vulnerable. Informed consent requires that potential participants chose freely whether to take part in the research and did not feel that they had no choice but to participate (Miller and Bell 2002). It is not up to the gatekeeper to decide whether an individual participates in the research, however, depending on the role of the gatekeeper, potential participants may feel that they must 'volunteer' for the research. This may be the case if someone in a position of power is requesting that they participate in research.

There were occasions when mentors stated that women had agreed to take part in an interview but did not then attend the interview. Although it may have been the case that women had simply forgotten their appointment, alternatively, the woman may have changed her mind and did not wish to participate. Women who missed appointments were not followed up to arrange another time as this may have put pressure on them to participate.

Although Sacro staff had been encouraged by Sacro management to participate in the research, and therefore may be argued to have been 'coerced' into interviews there was little evidence of this. For example, all staff interviewees were very open and

gave detailed answers to questions, showing an interest in the research. If they had felt 'coerced' I may have expected shorter answers to questions or an eagerness to finish the interview quickly. Requests to staff to participate were mainly in the form of email requests, or informal requests at staff meetings with a follow up email to confirm.

Before the start of the interviews, participants were asked to read the information sheet and invited to ask any questions about the research. If they were happy to proceed they were then asked to sign a consent form agreeing to participate in the study, agreeing to be tape recorded, to have anonymised quotes included in research reports and in the case of mentees asked for consent for me to have access to their Sacro case file data. It was made clear to participants that they should only consent to the conditions that they were comfortable with, for example, if they were comfortable with the interview being tape recorded and the location of the interviews. They were also reminded that they could stop the interview at any time. Participants were reassured that all the information they provided would be confidential and that I would be the only person who would listen to the tape recording of the interviews.

Confidentiality is another key component of research and participants were assured that I would be the only person that listened to the interview recordings and they would not be identified by name in any research reports. All participants were allocated a pseudonym. Mentors and other staff were allocated an abbreviation of their job title for the pseudonym and women who used the service were allocated a random female name to maintain the personal aspect of their accounts (see Appendix 6 for a list of pseudonyms).

Although I was not asking questions specifically about past experiences of traumatic events, it was still a possibility that interviews could raise topics that women may find distressing. An information sheet with details of local sources of support was given to the participants. However, it was anticipated that the safe research setting, and the close availability of Sacro support staff would provide direct and immediate sources of support for the women should they need it. There was also time at the end of the interview for an informal chat to raise any concerns or questions and all of the women were offered the opportunity to speak to a Sacro worker before they left the interview

location. Many of the women did speak to their worker before they departed, and some left immediately after the interview.

In order to meet the requirements of the ethics committee, it was necessary that the women did complete the research interviews in an environment where they had a support worker that they knew close by, should they become distressed. The presence of the mentor within the same building as the interviews may have influenced the extent to which mentees were willing to be critical of the service in interviews. I stressed that the interview was confidential, and that I would be the only person that would listen to the recording of the interview. I also reminded participants that any quotes used in reports would be anonymous and that I would not share what they had said with their mentor or anyone else.

Challenges

Although this study has the advantage of being partly funded by Sacro facilitating access to their service users, the population of women who offend is small in comparison to men who offend and therefore it is a more difficult task than recruiting other populations. In addition, this is a population that has high levels of depression and anxiety (Bloom and Covington 2008) and therefore may be reluctant to speak to someone they have never met before. This was also the case with the interviews: there were eleven women who had agreed to participate in an interview but did not attend on the specified date and time. It may have been the case that women agreed to participate when their mentor put forward the request because of the gratitude they felt towards their mentor but felt that they could not participate.

There were some difficulties with access to women who used the service, which was evident from the unequal numbers of participants across the different locations of the mentoring service. Ideally I would have preferred to have an equal number from each service, but access difficulties made this difficult to achieve. These access difficulties resulted in an exploration of Sacro's WMS as one service rather than separate services at each Sacro office location. Although this type of exploration was enforced by access difficulties, the similarities between services across different Sacro locations suggested that it was not an inappropriate approach. I was informed by one mentor that her clients were generally too 'chaotic' at present but she would contact me should there be any willing participants in the near future. This worker did set up

two interviews but the women did not attend. Another mentor stated that the women she worked with had difficulty taking part in a meeting which lasted more than a very short period of time and so they would be unlikely to be able to participate in interviews. Another worker was confident that she could access at least 10 participants who would be interested in participating in the research. However only one participant turned up for an interview. Several attempts were made to access more participants who used the service without success. This response from some gatekeepers may also have been a reflection of their desire to protect the women they worked with (and viewed as vulnerable) from the research process and unfamiliar situations. It appeared that assumptions were being made on behalf of women before they had been invited to participate in the research. Scourfield (2012) noted a familiar experience in his research involving elderly people in a care home. Although the author had secured ethical approval from the university and local authority, 'informal gatekeepers' were very protective of residents of the care home becoming involved in the research, viewing them as too vulnerable, including those who did have the mental capacity to consent and participate in the study.

The role of gatekeepers may therefore have had an influence on whether women participated in the research. As the mentors decided whether an individual was suitable to be involved in the research, this removed the choice from potential participants. Downes et al. (2014) argue that the experiences of marginalised groups can be blocked by ethical committees because they are labelled vulnerable. The authors argue that a 'positive empowerment' approach should be adopted when aiming to balance their goal of social justice for these marginalised groups and meeting the requirements of ethics committees. This approach follows an 'ethical protocol' that includes three key components: (i) conceptualising victim-survivors and perpetrators as active agents (ii) empowering participants to make choices about taking action to improve their lives and (iii) maximising opportunities for positive experiences and impacts of research. Although their research was focused on domestic violence, their protocol could be applied to any research where participants are viewed as 'vulnerable.' They argue that it should not be assumed that participation in research is going to be a negative experience for victims-survivors and consent should be negotiated throughout the research experience. In their own domestic violence research they sign-posted participants to other services and this was viewed as empowering participants to make choices, as they had few sources of support in

many cases. In relation to the third component identified, the authors gave the example of a participant in their own research who reflected that she valued her involvement because it provided her with the opportunity to raise awareness about the complexities of domestic violence and allowed her to reflect on her own changes in her life.

There is also the possibility that women were excluded from the study by gatekeepers because they had a negative experience with the service and the worker. I did notify the 'formal gatekeeper' (Senior Management) about the access issues, but this did not result in many more interviews being set up. There is a difference in having official permission or approval from formal gatekeepers and having the cooperation of informal gatekeepers at the research site (Wanat 2008). Formal gatekeepers will grant access approval but may have different goals than informal gatekeepers at the research sites, who may deny/facilitate access based on other factors, such as protecting their clients, especially if they view them as vulnerable (Wanat 2008). It may have been the case that staff were cautious about a researcher scrutinising the service they were providing, especially when working in an environment where service funding is short-term and jobs are unstable. It is, however, acknowledged that although access was controlled by gatekeepers, without their cooperation it would have been difficult to contact women.

There was a difficulty with accessing a significant volume of case file data of the women who had used the mentoring service. When data was available, there was information missing in some cases such as dates. This meant that it was very difficult to make comparisons between two Homes Matrix Forms from the same individual, for example, because it was not known how much time had passed between measurements. For example in the case of the Homes Matrix Form, there were 111 forms with data available but only 42 had Homes Matrix Forms recorded at a later date. The Key Performance Indicators also appeared to have data missing. This also impacted on the present study, in that the quality of the quantitative data limited the claims that could be made based on this data. It could not be claimed that this quantitative data was representative of all of the women who passed through the mentoring service.

Process of data analysis

The process of data analysis resembled that put forward by Strauss (1987) which involves the three stages of open coding, axial coding and selective coding. In the first stage of open coding, interview transcripts were coded freely. It involved coding the data line by line, which led to the identification of several codes. Codes were revisited and grouped together to form categories and themes. Although a number of themes had already been generated through the literature review and interview schedules, this process also aimed to identify any new categories/themes so it was not purely deductive or inductive. The next stage of data analysis was in line with axial coding, where themes were linked together across participant types and within participant types. The categories and themes identified in the first stage were checked again against interview data. During the final stage of the data analysis, which is referred to as selective coding, data which represented the main themes and categories were selected. Across all of these stages of analysis there was a constant checking and re-checking of codes, categories and themes with the data. There were also constant comparisons made between and within the accounts from participants.

The data was stored and organised using the computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) NVivo 10. This was an efficient tool for storing themes and accessing data representing themes quickly. Nodes were used initially to represent codes, then combined to represent categories and themes. One node represented a theme, with several tree nodes representing sub-themes. Within each theme, comparisons were made between participant types and also within participants to explore whether accounts contained contradictions.

Due to the lack of quantitative data and the preference for a qualitative approach, the analysis of quantitative data was very basic and descriptive. Results from Homes Matrix were analysed for the most common 'needs' among women and for data that was available, improvements made in these areas over time. It was also used to look at background information where women gave consent, this included age, offence type and number of children. This analysis was conducted with the aim of providing an overview of the different types of needs of women who used the service. However the richness of the data was provided by the qualitative interviews.

Chapter 5 - Before mentoring: profile of women

This chapter, the first of three findings chapters, explores the issues and circumstances of the women who accessed the Sacro Women's Mentoring Service. It may be that mentoring only benefits those women with less complex issues that do not necessarily represent the wider population of women in contact with the criminal justice system in Scotland.

Firstly, this chapter discusses the eligibility of women to be referred to the mentoring service. This is followed by a description of the age, offence type and motivations for offending of women who engaged with mentoring from their own perspective and those of mentors. The next section presents a discussion of the issues and structural barriers experienced by the women who accessed this service, from the perspectives of all interviewees and some information from case file data. An understanding of these issues is required, to consider what the areas of focus should be for a mentoring service that aims to adequately support women in the criminal justice system.

Eligibility for mentoring

For women to be eligible to access the mentoring service, there had to be a 'contact with the criminal justice system', which means that to access mentoring, women had to be on a statutory order or have recently left prison, with the exception of the Lanarkshire service where self-referral was also available. Subsequently, the mentoring service was directed largely towards women who already had convictions and not towards women who were viewed of 'at risk of offending' but did not have a criminal record.

Fourteen of the women interviewed and one woman who provided a written account of her experiences were on a statutory order and were referred to Sacro via their criminal justice social worker. The remaining five interviewees accessed the mentoring service via the prison service while in custody. Women who accessed mentors through prison reported that they accessed the service because they knew that they would need support when they left prison. The women who were referred by their social worker to Sacro were generally unsure what mentoring would involve but accessed the service based on the advice from their social worker.

Mentors and staff were asked whether they knew of any particular issues that would make a woman ineligible for mentoring. The common view was that most women could benefit from mentoring, but in some situations it was inappropriate for a woman to be referred to the service, for example, if a woman was already in contact with many workers from different organisations or she was judged to be 'too chaotic':

M3: Well we do work with women who have mental health and addiction issues but if they are really chaotic, they're maybe just not ready for mentoring. You know if they're really chaotic. So in that case it would not be appropriate. It probably would not be safe for the mentor in that situation.

The majority of mentoring staff were of the view that mentoring would be suitable for the woman at some stage in her life even if she was 'not ready' for mentoring at present. However, there were a minority of mentors and Sacro staff who were of the view that some women could not be adequately supported by a mentoring service, for example, women with severe learning difficulties, serious mental health problems or as a result of their own choice:

Mngr 2: I think there are people who will always need a high level of ongoing support, that mentoring won't be for them, and that's people who maybe have so much high support needs, i.e. if someone has a learning disability... that person is never going to be at the stage where there is mentoring...Some women who I've come across in the past who their addiction is so entrenched and they don't want to change, they want to still continue to live that life and that role. That person, mentoring wouldn't be suitable for them because they don't want to change, they don't want to be there.

Criminal justice social workers were also asked about any factors that would stop them from making a referral to mentoring. They agreed with mentors that a woman who was too 'chaotic' and therefore not likely to engage, would not be referred. Also in line with the views of mentors, social workers stated they might not refer a woman to mentoring if she was already in contact with several workers from other organisations. This suggests that mentoring may be limited in its ability to support women who have serious addiction and mental health problems. It may be that only those women with

less serious needs, who may be less likely to offend before mentoring, are those that engage with the service.

Age, offence type and motivations

Data from Sacro's KPI reports showed that of 107 women referred from April 2013 to May 2014, 11% were in the age range 18-24, 83% were in the age range 25-49, 4% were in the over 50 category and 2% were recorded as 'not yet known'. Table 4 details the ages of the women who participated in interviews and those detailed in the KPI reports.

Table 4: Age of women who accessed the Sacro WMS

Source of Data	Age				
	16-17	18-24	25-49	Over 50	Not Yet Known
KPIs Apr 2013 - Mar 2014	0	9	65	2	1
KPIs Apr - May 2014	0	3	24	2	1
Interview Participants	0	1	16	3	0

Other mentoring programmes have reported a similar age demographic. The WIPAN mentoring programme in Australia reported that the majority of the women who used their service were in the age range of 25-34 years. Brown and Ross (2010a) reported that 80% of women under the age of 30 disengaged with their mentor immediately after release from prison, compared to 40% of women over 40 in the Vacro mentoring programme. Similarly, the Shine Mentoring Programme in Scotland reported that mentors viewed younger women as more likely to disengage with the service than older women (Ipsos MORI 2015). Younger women may be less likely to be 'ready for mentoring' or are not being referred to mentoring. The service may have been directed towards women who had a long history of offending rather than women who may be at risk of offending but have not been convicted of an offence. The smaller number of younger women engaging with mentoring in Scotland may also reflect the decreasing number of convictions for women in Scotland under the age of 21 and the increasing number of convictions for women over the age of 30 (Burman and McIvor 2011; Scottish Government 2015).

The majority of the women who were interviewed in the present study had been convicted of less serious offences such as shoplifting and breach of the peace usually related to their drug and alcohol use. This is described by two women:

Fiona: I was going shop lifting. I hated that, I hated it. Every morning you would wake up with that feeling 'aw no, do I need to do this again?' It's horrible, stealing, shoplifting.

Gemma: The order was given for breach of the peace, numerous overdoses, incarcerations for my own protection, playing music in the home too loud.

There were a small number of women who had been convicted of more serious offences, before engaging with a mentor. One woman was convicted of assault with injury (domestic injury) and it was her first offence. Four women were serving prison sentences before engaging, with the mentoring service, with sentences ranging from one year to six years. Their offences included drug trafficking, a Schedule 1 sex offence, assault with injury and abduction. The offences committed by the majority of women in the study were similar to that of women in the criminal justice system in Scotland generally. In 2014 to 2015, less than 2% of the offences and crimes committed by women in Scotland involved serious violence. Women accounted for over a third of fraud and shoplifting convictions and 20% of common assault (Scottish Government 2016). Although the majority of women in the present study were receiving support from a Sacro mentor because they were on a statutory order in the community, most had a history of offending and experience of prison. This cumulative experience of short-term prison sentences and contact with the criminal justice system may have been more damaging for women than one longer term sentence (Armstrong and Weaver 2010).

Women in the present study did not speak in depth about their underlying reasons for offending, however it was clear that they did not view offending as a 'need' and an area that needed attention specifically. For example, women did not offend because of the 'thrill' of offending.

Rachel: You're there [at probation appointment] to talk to them so you don't reoffend but sometimes I'd walk out and go right away and just steal anyway because they'd annoyed me that much. They weren't willing to help, they would just say 'don't do this and don't do that. It's not about not doing it, it's about trying to help me stop doing it.'

Rachel committed an offence when she left a meeting with her supervising social worker, in response to the frustration she felt that her needs (e.g. bipolar disorder) were not being met. She is clearly defiant and blaming of the social worker for her offending. Rachel's quote also challenges the argument that she is only a victim without agency, as she goes shop lifting after her appointment. Another woman explained the practical challenges of the transition of prison to the community and the relationship of these difficulties with reoffending:

Claire: Because you only get a lib grant, it's not very much money and then you've got all these places to phone. All the running about to do and that's when most people after maybe phoning up the benefits agency 4 or 5 times in the one day end up hanging up the phone and walking and shop lifting after drinking. They start reoffending again because things...I mean things are hard for everybody now, even people that are out there working or bringing in a wage, things are hard. You know all the benefits system has all changed. It all changed there on 1st April. Women aren't even getting a community care grant¹⁵.

Mentors and social workers were in agreement that women offended because of underlying issues and that offending was a by-product of coping with other needs:

M1: You know women have very complex needs and there tends to be some form of trauma or abuse that then leads to misuse alcohol/drugs, negative relationships, offending behaviour. So never starts off with a woman just going out and offending.

¹⁵ Community care grants are provided to people on low income to live independently, for example following a period of imprisonment or care.

Women were described as 'chaotic' and 'vulnerable' by mentors due to experiences of homelessness, drug use, problematic relationships and other difficulties symptomatic of their marginalisation. For example:

M8: I think initially because they are so chaotic they just will, in my experience, let their bills pile up or they've not got anybody there to encourage them 'come on, lets get this sorted out' you'll feel better once it is sorted out.

Mngr1: A lot of our women come from very vulnerable backgrounds which makes them quite vulnerable women and unfortunately they tend to be drawn to people who recognise that vulnerability and can abuse it. If you've come up through childhood maybe having abusive parents, whether that be physically, sexually or emotionally, to then enter into adulthood life with relationships that continue to be that way then you don't identify good qualities in yourself because no one else has ever identified those qualities in you. It's very sad.

Although many women who offend have experienced high levels of victimisation it does not necessarily follow that they are not able to demonstrate agency (Allen 1987; Batchelor 2005). Viewing women as vulnerable and not capable of making rational decisions about their own life due to their experiences of abuse could be disempowering (Batchelor 2005).

Some mentors associated this 'chaotic lifestyle' with women missing appointments including mandatory statutory social work appointments. Previous literature has identified risk of breaching statutory orders as more relevant for women than men, with women more likely to breach their order through missing appointments rather than committing another offence (Malloch and McIvor 2011; Angiolini et al. 2012).

Overview of common issues

Depression and financial problems (benefits, debt, budgeting) were the most common issues identified by the women who were interviewed. Social isolation, low confidence and self-esteem, drugs and alcohol abuse/dependency (past or present) were also frequently identified in interviews as being important by women. All of the women had

more than one of those issues with the majority reporting at least three. In addition, there were several other difficulties identified by the women themselves, including: housing; access to children; transition from prison to community; relationships; bipolar disorder; anxiety; physical health; employment/education; trauma and dissatisfaction with other organisations/social work. Two women describe some of these difficulties:

Diana: I wasn't leaving the house unless I had to leave the house. I was frightened about trying to go to a therapy or something like that. Sitting in a café...

Katie: I used it [mentoring] because I needed help with anger management and things like that. Things to do with my kids and social work.

The numerous issues experienced by the women in the present study is typical of the wider population of women in the criminal justice system and those who have been referred to mentoring programmes (McIvor et al. 2009; Brown and Ross 2010a; Trotter 2011; Keating 2012; Ipsos MORI 2015; Mulholland et al. 2016). When mentors and social workers were asked about the problems of the women they mentored, finance, housing, drug/alcohol misuse, mental health, social isolation and relationships were frequently identified. Information from the file data (Homes Matrix forms) of 156 women who used Sacro's mentoring service indicated that the most common issues of women were: shelter; food/clothing/possessions; emotional health; financial and social relationships. Drug/alcohol use may not have been recorded as a common issue because the Homes Matrix form measures 'current use of drugs or alcohol' and when women are engaging with a mentor they are unlikely to be heavily using substances. Women may be less likely to reveal the true extent of their problems at the start of a relationship. The next section will examine some of these issues in more depth.

Financial hardship

All of the women in the present study were unemployed. One woman was currently undertaking a regular volunteer role, while another was actively seeking regular volunteer work. The woman who was currently volunteering worked professionally for many years before her offence and did not have the same barriers to employment as the other women. Very few of the women interviewed had any qualifications or

significant employment history, and all were currently receiving benefits payments. Many of the women found it difficult to cope with the limited resources they had access to:

Gemma: people on benefits on a more basic level truly struggle to heat their homes in winter and make decisions between food and heat at times. This struggle adds to depression, stress and feelings of hopelessness.

Gemma was at a stage in the mentoring relationship when she was due to be leaving the service shortly. This quote therefore reflects that mentoring cannot make significant change to circumstances that women are experiencing and changes outwith criminal justice are required to make changes to their economic situation. This daily struggle to survive on low resources is representative of those living in poverty more generally. For example, increasing reliance on foodbanks for people in Scotland has been highlighted in a recent report by Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS), where it was revealed that in 2014/15 advice in relation to foodbanks was provided on 7,400 instances which is 47% increase from 2013/14 (CAS 2016). In addition, fuel poverty is a substantial issue in Scotland, with the most recent figures suggesting that over a third of all Scottish households are in fuel poverty (Scottish Government 2014). Although all of the women were experiencing economic disadvantage, those who had recently left prison found the transition from prison to the community challenging due to the lack of resources:

Claire: So basically I was serving a prison sentence and was going to come out of prison with no clothes, no place to stay and with no money, with no funds, so that was a huge fear to step through the gates.

This is consistent with research by McIvor et al. (2009) exploring post-release experiences of women which was reviewed in Chapter 2. In McIvor and colleagues study many women reported feeling lonely and stressed on release due to the lack of support and numerous practical demands. Some women reported feeling unsure and anxious about applying for benefits and some were not clear about their eligibility for specific welfare benefits. The recent welfare reform added to this lack of clarity and anxiety for women around their finances. As noted in Chapter 2, several changes had been made to welfare benefits that had considerable impact on women and those who

were already living in poverty. This struggle to survive on limited resources affected the emotional health and wellbeing of the women. It was common for women to be isolated and not have support from family or friends, making access to resources even more difficult as described by Barbara:

I've got no immediate family so it's not like I can get help from them so I really do need to start tightening the old belt buckle and saying like, enough's enough. Let's get this sorted.

Financial hardship was one of the most important challenges for women not only because of the direct lack of resources but due to its relationship with other issues such as mental health and drug and alcohol misuse. Although financial problems may be labelled as a 'need' they are a symptom of the structural barriers of class and poverty.

Education, income, occupational status and work histories provided an indication of social class. As the majority of women in the present study were disadvantaged in all of these areas, their social class cannot be described as 'working class.' The majority of women were unemployed and spoke of living in areas where there was a lack of employment and problems such as drug misuse. The women in this study were experiencing high levels of poverty that were being exacerbated by the recent welfare reform. Therefore these experiences suggested that the women came from a marginalised class similar to that described by Baldry (2010) when she described women who have offended as living in a disadvantaged 'space' from an early age.

Drug and alcohol use

The majority of the women interviewed had current or previous alcohol or drug problems. Nine women in the present study revealed that they had used alcohol or drugs to cope with various issues, including significant periods of waiting for criminal justice processes:

*Diane: Bottles and bottles of wine, bottles and bottles of gin for 2 years.
The whole year of waiting, because I waited a whole year to go to court.*

Diane stated that she used alcohol in response to the stress of not knowing whether she would receive a prison sentence for her offence (domestic assault with injury). It was her first offence and she found her involvement in the criminal justice system to be a traumatic experience. Other women reported that they used drugs and/or alcohol because it helped them to ease the helplessness and depression they experienced which was exacerbated by financial hardship and trauma as a result of separation from children. For women who were facing poverty, victimisation and separation from their children, the benefits of abstaining from drugs or alcohol could seem limited:

Linda: Now I went through years, a year with this trial and I didn't think of drink or drugs thank god. Then one day I got a letter in saying my money had been cut and that night I thought 'I'm better off on drink and drugs'...but thank god the feeling does pass.

The women were all at different stages of alcohol and drugs recovery. While the majority had reduced their drug use significantly, relapse was still common and some women had stopped using heroin, for example, but used other drugs:

Christine: I used to take heroin. I don't take heroin anymore but I occasionally what I do is take crack cocaine but that's just occasionally. I've not got a habit with it but I have got an addictive nature and I still do drink but not as much...That's a lot to do with my mood. If I'm feeling depressed instead of killing myself, I'll take a drink to stop me from feeling that way.

This quote suggests that alcohol and drugs were used to self-medicate for depression. Christine had been a drug user for many years, and had experienced trauma throughout her life. At eight years old she was in a car accident that resulted in learning difficulties. She had also experienced domestic violence and bereavement.

Many of the women spoke about living in communities where drug misuse was common.

Alison: I changed my chemist because the one I was in they all fight with each other and punch out each other. They stand outside and all congregate and exchange drugs and swap drugs and there's cameras

everywhere and you're like that 'how stupid are all yous.' They say 'do you want to share methadone? - Naw I don't, stay away from me' (laughing).

Rachel: They do methadone bags, valium, dope and its pure greed and filth but that's just the community nowadays and that's it isn't it. It's either in it or out it and I was in it and trying to get out of it but it's quite hard when you're in the middle of it.

It is clear that the women lived in areas that were marginalised, with significant barriers to their recovery and a lack of opportunity to escape from their disadvantaged circumstances. This also reflects the local drug culture that exists in many communities within Scotland. It is estimated that almost 60,000 people within Scotland use drugs problematically (Information Services Division 2014).

Emotional and mental health

In the present study 19 (out of 20) women spoke about suffering from depression. Two of the women interviewed had been diagnosed with bipolar disorder. Information from 114 Homes Matrix Forms from case files indicated that 75% of women had poor emotional health. Mental health was related to other factors such as drug use and poverty:

Fiona: See my depression comes and goes. But it comes and goes with the drugs so I maybe take the valium for a while and then I get depressed and I didnae realise for...15 years I did that and it was depressing me!...Aye it's definitely drugs, it's definitely. I never had depression. None of my family's got depression. Just me. So it's obviously the drugs.

The mentors highlighted the frequency of mental health problems in the women they supported. For example:

M1: There is obviously practical issues and stuff that I will do with the women but all of my clients have either got a mental health issue, whether it's depression, anxiety - all these kinds of things...There's always triggers, there's always something that it's stemmed from and it's came from.

These findings are consistent with the wider literature on women in the criminal justice system on statutory orders and in prison in Scotland, UK wide and internationally (Corston 2007; Gelsthorpe et al. 2007; McIvor et al. 2009; Angiolini et al. 2012).

The use of the criminal justice system as a place of safety or protection for women with mental health problems is inappropriate and highlights the lack of services available to women with circumstances such as Gemma:

I was very distressed and suffering from undiagnosed bi-polar. I was charged with breach of the peace for playing my music too loud, taken into the police cells for my own protection. I called for help after overdosing twice. I was drinking to cope with the depression and anxiety and because I did not care about myself I wanted to be dead and I was full of self-loathing and grief for my mother... I am ashamed of my involvement with the police, humiliated.

Gemma's quote suggests that the criminal justice system is being used to 'support' some individuals with mental health problems. Higher rates of mental health problems among women who offend have been reported to be related to their experiences of victimisation and marginalisation including domestic violence, sexual abuse and bereavement which have then led to incidents of self-harm and suicide (Mills et al. 2013). A number of academics have questioned the criminalisation of women with mental health problems as these problems are then viewed as a deficit in the individual as opposed to a rational response to experiences of abuse (Pollack 2005; Mills et al. 2013). Although the women in the present study were not currently in prison, their experience of the criminal justice system may have impacted further on their mental health.

Trauma

Victimisation and trauma have been introduced in previous sections due to their intersection with mental health and drug use. Trauma was not discussed in depth by women in interviews. It is understandable that women may not talk about these experiences to a researcher whom they have met for the first time. However some of the women did comment on their experiences of trauma including: domestic abuse (3); bereavement (1); children being taken into care (3) and childhood sexual abuse

(1). Many of the staff perceived trauma to be a key reason for offending behaviour by women, in that traumatic experiences caused women to misuse drug and alcohol or enter negative relationships which led to offending. Trauma was viewed as highly prevalent in the lives of the women they worked with, especially childhood abuse and domestic violence:

M4: I've got a girl right now who's got the most abusive partner, he's absolutely horrible. He's in and out of prison, he's only out for a few days at a time and he's back in. I don't know how he keeps getting out. Every time he's out, he finds her, he beats the living daylights out of her and she gets remanded for breaching her bail [conditions] because she's got conditions not to go anywhere near him. But she doesn't go out of her way to find him, he goes out of his way to find her.

Staff who had experience of working with both men and women in the criminal justice system stated that although they had worked with men who had experienced trauma, they had noticed differences in the way that the trauma was 'managed' by the women compared to men:

Mngr1: that's not to say that men don't experience trauma. I think they experience it and manage it differently...I've worked with both men and women and my approach to working with men is different to my approach to working with women. Men will open up to you and perhaps tell you that trauma has occurred. What they won't do is go into detail on that trauma or even look for an explanation....so I think the emotional support side is the difference.

A significant number of mentors stated that the women they worked with had experienced the trauma of their children being taken into care:

Louise: My wee boy stayed in Drumchapel with foster carers and she used to walk by me and I stayed in Drumchapel across the road and she was always in the park with them and when I went over to see him she said 'you can't see him.'

It has been argued that one of the unique needs of women compared to men is the likelihood of victimisation being continued into adulthood (Covington and Bloom 2007). This was a common theme identified by mentors and social workers, for example:

SW5: the various levels in which so many of the women we work with have been abused as well, maybe as a child, then as a teenager, then as an adult. It's a sort of layering of trauma that's really disturbing. When you go through someone's background with someone, you can't actually believe what you're hearing sometimes, because they have just been abused by every single person in their life and you think 'how are you still here?'

The above observation is supported by the claim of Segrave and Carlton (2010) and Baldry (2010) that trauma is a constant lived experience throughout the lives of women who offend and not a one off event. It is therefore sometimes a normalised experience for women who offend.

Relationships

The majority of women in the present study were mothers. Five of the women were primary caregivers, 5 had grown up children, 4 did not have any children and 5 women had children who were in care. Three of the five women with grown up children indicated that they had a strained relationship with their children:

Fiona: I've got a daughter, she's 21. She stopped speaking to me altogether just now. We were fine and then her dad told her everything that I've done when she was 8 and I got into the drugs and what I'd done. So she's not speaking to me just now. I keep emailing her every 10 minutes and phoning her and texting her (laughs). Eventually she'll come round.

Gaining access to children was the main concern for 3 of the women and caused them considerable emotional stress:

Louise: My kids don't stay with me. I've got six kids and none of them stay with me so it's hard for me as well. Christmas and New Year, but obviously

it's more Christmas because when I had them in my care - waking up with them and Christmas Eve and just missing them in general. It's hard.

Mentors frequently identified problematic relationships as an important issue for the women, including family relationships and abusive relationships with partners. Women also spoke about having strained relationships with other family members. In the following quote Alison is talking about her experience when she told her mother that she had stopped using drugs:

Alison: My mum says 'that's good, just hope it stays that way'...A wee bit under pressure with my family. I had to cut my mum out my life actually for a while because I felt as if she was making me worse and I was getting down and down and down.

This shows the negative impact that relationships can have on women achieving their goals. Alison's felt like she had no option but to cut contact with her mother, if she wanted to achieve her goals. There were a small number of women who described having positive family support, however both women and mentors stated that this was rare and mentors in particular reported that families were sometimes the reason for the onset of offending through abuse and introduction to drugs. However in cases where there was positive family support, this was very important for the women as a source of emotional support and vital practical support:

Jacqui: Well I'm staying with my mum when I'm home [home leave]. They visit me at the jail. Then I meet them up the town. See I'm in like the jail houses now just outside but it's still under prison rules. I get to meet them up the town in Stirling. We go to the gym in Stirling uni. On a wed night...just being there for me. They help me out, they get me my clothes and that. Somewhere to live when I come home from prison.

Many of the women spoke about not having any friends or family and how they liked to 'keep their head down.' These complex relationships are in line with research suggesting that relationships have a unique role in desistance for women, compared to men (Leverentz 2006). It may be the case for men that marriage and relationships promote desistance, however for women certain relationships may need to be avoided

to facilitate a woman's wellbeing and survival. Debbie spoke about how she distanced herself from everyone she knew in order to start her life afresh with her children:

Debbie: Sold everything in my house. Got a new flat. Told no one for a year and for the last 2 and a half year, nearly 3 year, just building my life up again.

Several women reported that they had acquaintances in their life but not people they identified as friends:

Jacqui: I just speak to my family. I don't bother with my old pals or anything...Well they never came to visit me in prison so if they were true pals they would have came up. I just don't bother with them now.

Some women also related social isolation to their experiences of boredom and low mood. Previous research has suggested that depression, isolation, boredom and poverty are related to drug-related offences (Carlen 1988; Malloch 2004). Segrave and Carlton (2010) described social isolation and boredom after leaving prison as 'emotional hardship.' The women in the present study did not only experience these types of emotional hardships after leaving prison, but also if they were on a community statutory order and were making a conscious decision to distance themselves from people associated with their offending.

When asked about social activities or groups, some of the women reported that they attended groups that were specifically targeted towards women in contact with the criminal justice system, but very few of the women attended any other social groups. This is understandable due to the presence of factors such as poverty, anxiety, depression and stigma. The resulting social isolation and lack of positive relationships also represented a lack of social capital. When defining social capital in terms of bridging and bonding social capital, it is clear that the majority of women have low levels of both. There were some instances of bonding social capital present as Fiona describes, but these were rare in the accounts of women who use the mentoring service:

Fiona: I go to my grannies now and I clean her house on a Friday which is a big help. That's a wee bit of money...I know it's only £20 but it's more than that because my granny buys my clothes for me and it's not just £20 and then my dad comes in and gives me £20 and my uncle comes in and gives me another £20.

Stigma is another factor that can influence the types of social networks that women will have access to. Women who are involved in the criminal justice system often experience shame and embarrassment about their offending due to the stigma it attracts. This stigma is likely to be more severe for women than men who offend, due to the violation of gender norms (McIvor et al. 2004; Malloch and McIvor 2011). Although women were not asked directly about stigma, interviews did reveal that it was experienced by at least half of the women interviewed. Alison describes an experience where she felt stigmatised when she went to collect her suboxone¹⁶ prescription from the pharmacy:

Alison: so you're not allowed to go in until half nine but anybody that's going in for any other medication can be there at nine. If you go in at nine you're turned away. Now you're a person, you're a human being as well. That's your medication to help you function every day and you're getting turned away because they're dealing with as they call it 'normal people.' So instantly the chemist make people feel like that and that's why a lot of people don't go for their medication and I see them not going for it and missing days because 'I don't like that pharmacist, she's making me feel this way and that way.' I was barred from that chemist up there because I spoke my mind to her.

It is clear that Alison feels that she is being judged because she is only permitted to go to the pharmacy at a specific time and is not treated like a 'normal' person due to her label as an 'addict.' Sharpe (2015) also noted that stigma could prevent women from accessing services. Young women in Sharpe's study avoided community services such as a 'children's centre' as they did not wish to interact with others who knew that they had been convicted of a crime. This highlights how the criminalisation

¹⁶ Suboxone is used in the treatment of heroin addiction.

of women in poverty further excludes them from services. Women also spoke of their embarrassment and shame due to their poverty and mental health. For example, one woman described feeling like a 'scrounger' because she was a recipient of welfare benefits and another refused the offer to attend a foodbank because she felt 'too embarrassed'. Another woman felt discouraged from attending groups at her local community centre due to a fear of being recognised by other people in her local area. This is in line with research by Malloch and McIvor (2011) who reported that women undertaking community sentences felt self-conscious as they believed that other people knew that they had committed an offence.

Accommodation

All of the women who were interviewed were in accommodation, however the standard of accommodation varied. Accounts from mentors and social work staff, and Homes Matrix scores suggested that housing was an important need for many of the women:

SW8: I've got a girl coming out of prison on the 17th of December, she's homeless. I've actually got quite a lot of women coming out over the Christmas period and a lot of them are homeless and it really worries me because there are going to be skeleton [a lack of] staff over that period [in housing agencies and social work] but this lady's coming out. I phoned housing and I got her housing support officer in Hamilton and said 'is there any way you can put something [accommodation] in place?'... 'no she'll need to present as homeless that day and we'll look at it that day and it'll just be whatever there is that day'

Mngr1: homelessness is huge. I mean if you've got someone living in emergency accommodation, emergency homeless accommodation, then it's very difficult for them to stabilise.

The majority of women did not view housing as a 'need' and although some women indicated that mentors tried to assist with housing issues, they also acknowledged that accommodation issues were outwith the control of mentors. This reflects the limitations of a mentoring service, for impacting on the wider circumstances of women outside of the criminal justice system. Many women felt that they had no issues

relating to their accommodation. This contradicts the assertion by mentors and social workers that housing was one of the most important issues for women, and the Homes Matrix scores which showed 'shelter' as an important need at the start of the mentoring relationship. This contradiction might suggest that women who had unstable accommodation or were homeless did not engage with mentoring consistently, or at all therefore were not included in the research. This data may also reflect that the majority of the women in the present study were referred via their criminal justice social worker and had not left prison immediately prior to their engagement with a mentor. Another possibility for women not viewing 'housing' as a need is that they had always lived in deprived conditions and did not expect any improvement in their living conditions.

However four women did indicate that 'housing' had been a concern for them before they were mentored or was currently. One woman had accessed her accommodation via the Sacro Supported Accommodation Service, two women were currently in temporary accommodation and one woman had gained resources for her flat such as carpets and paint through her mentor:

Alana: Yeah, me, [my mentor] and my housing officer are trying to get me into a scatter flat where it's just for me but there's a waiting list and it's pretty tight just now but it would be good if I could get my own scatter flat, because like I've had people that stay there - drug users, using on the premises, stealing my clothes, stealing my make-up, stealing my converse trainers and my shorts, skirts, everything.

Some women also noted that they were unhappy with the location of their accommodation:

Alison: I'd moved down here to get away from the circle of people up the street that I was involved with to get myself out of that kind of life but now when I've come down here they've all started moving down here which is making me feel trapped again. I feel trapped they're at each end of me like I can't get away from it. So the neighbour situation and all that is fine but my daughter is not happy here with her circle of friends and I'm not happy

here either with these people around about me. I know if I move things will change. If I don't move things are going to get worse.

This suggests that housing problems are part of the marginalised lives of the women generally and not only related to the impact of imprisonment.

Summary

The mentoring service was largely directed towards those women with convictions who had recently left prison or were subject to a statutory social work order. The service lacked a preventative component as women without a criminal conviction were not eligible for the service. Women who were viewed to be 'too chaotic' were also unlikely to be able to engage with mentoring, which may limit the suitability of the service for those women with serious mental health or addiction problems. For the majority of women in this study, the type of offences committed and the motivations for offending did not appear to be related to hedonistic or impulsive thoughts but rather addiction, mental health and general disadvantage. Depression, financial difficulties and social isolation were common issues described by women, as well as low confidence and self-esteem. Problematic drug and alcohol use had featured in the lives of many women, although the majority stated that they were not currently heavily using drugs or alcohol. A significant number of women were either separated from their children or had problematic family relationships, which they found distressing. The backgrounds of the women and the difficulties they faced are similar to those of women in prison in Scotland generally and those in the community on statutory orders (Angiolini et al. 2012; Malloch et al. 2014, Ipsos MORI 2015; Dryden and Souness 2015).

Many of the difficulties that women have experienced reflect structural disadvantage throughout their lives including abuse, addiction and poverty. These are similar to what Baldry (2010: 261) described as living in a 'liminal and marginal space.' Workers were empathetic about the disadvantaged circumstances of many of the women they worked with. However, it does not necessarily follow that a recognition of structural disadvantage will be accounted for in the processes of the mentoring service. This will be considered in the following chapter. In addition, there will be an exploration of whether the issues identified in this chapter are prioritised in the mentoring process, to give an indication of the underlying philosophy of the Sacro WMS.

Chapter 6 - The mentoring process

This chapter addresses questions around the definition and purpose of mentoring in addition to the key consideration of whether mentoring activities are centred around the issues of women that were described in Chapter 5. There was a recognition by mentors and staff that many women they had worked with had experienced difficult circumstances throughout their lives and this was related to their involvement with the criminal justice system. A key question in this chapter is therefore, whether this understanding by staff was reflected in mentoring practice.

The chapter commences with a description of the recruitment and training process which mentors underwent. It follows with an examination of how mentoring is understood by mentors and women who use the service and how this reflects the underlying assumptions of the mentoring model. The structure of the mentoring relationship is examined, identifying specific activities that took place and valued characteristics of the relationship. The contribution of volunteer mentors is also explored. Mentoring as part of multi-agency working is discussed with a particular emphasis on the connection and comparison with criminal justice social work services. Finally, there is a discussion on whether gender was considered in mentoring and if so how this was applied in practice.

Recruitment and training of mentors

Mentoring posts were advertised online, via the Sacro website and other recruitment websites. Sacro advertised for 'Criminal Justice Support Worker (female)' with details of mentoring within the job description and specification. The job description stated that the role involved carrying out day to day support of service users in line with a care plan and supporting individuals leaving custody. Experience sought included: experience of mentoring women with chaotic lifestyles; experience of supporting women to make more healthy choices, including supporting them with drug and alcohol issues and experience of supporting women to maintain statutory orders. A mentoring qualification was desirable but not essential as were other relevant qualifications, for example, a counselling qualification. When recruiting paid mentors, Sacro managers stated in interviews, that they recruited women with a background in social care and preferably with experience of working in the criminal justice sector. There were also development opportunities for volunteer mentors to progress to

become paid mentors, as evidenced by four paid mentors who had previously volunteered as Sacro mentors. Communication and networking skills were desirable attributes for those applying for the role of mentor. In addition to experience, managers would seek to recruit individuals they viewed as having similar values to current staff at Sacro:

Mngr1: I sat in an interview with the woman who even her terminology of the women that we work with was completely inappropriate and she would not have been selected to work with our female service users. Again it comes down to attitude, it comes down to values, and it's really important that whoever comes in and works with the women and within the team is a really good fit.

This importance of shared values and attitudes was also documented in an evaluation of the 218 service in Glasgow and viewed as being equally important to skills and training (Loucks et al. 2006). Some mentors stated that without these values and commitment to the role, it would be difficult to cope with the emotional challenges of the position:

M4: I think we always say that everyone that works for Sacro has the same kind of values and ethics and things like that. I think you've got to be a certain type of person to do support work. You've got to be the kind of person that is willing to go above and beyond and willing to do a wee bit extra. Yeah it does get frustrating at times and some people you just want to shake but you have to be a very very patient person and someone that is going to go the extra mile because otherwise there is just no point in this job unless you can do it.

Recruitment of volunteer mentors was also primarily via the Sacro website, the Volunteer Scotland website and by word of mouth. When recruiting volunteer mentors, similar attributes were sought in terms of values. Relevant work experience was not essential, although it was viewed as beneficial. Managers stated that 'life experience' was just as valuable as education when recruiting volunteers. This referred to various life experiences such as looking after children or seeking employment. Volunteer

mentors were asked to commit to volunteering as a mentor for at least six months and 4 hours per week.

The training of mentors who support women in the criminal justice system has not received significant attention in the literature. The complex lives of the women and the level of practical support that mentors provide suggests that mentor training will be required in a range of areas. The initial training that both paid and volunteer mentors received was standard for the majority of Sacro criminal justice workers and included: adult support and protection; crisis safety management; first aid; child protection and boundaries training. In addition to this standard training, new mentors would undertake a period of shadowing with a current mentor, usually for at least two weeks but this varied depending on the experience of the new staff member.

Training courses in areas specific to the issues of individual women were undertaken while working in the mentoring role. These courses related to areas such as mental health, self-harm, suicide, drugs and alcohol, benefits and welfare reform, domestic abuse, trauma, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and 'mentoring' training. The training was often sourced from organisations such as the National Health Service (NHS) and Local Authorities. It was not clear how CBT was used in practice as mentors were in the process of being trained. CBT has been criticised in relation to working with women in the criminal justice system (Hubbard and Matthews 2008). Although it did not appear that CBT was being used with women to a large extent, the training of women in this area suggests that the philosophy underlying mentoring does favour a psychological approach. Alternatively, having mentors trained in CBT may add value to the service from the perspective of potential funders. Mental Health First Aid training and ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) were two specific courses which were viewed as hugely beneficial and vital for the role by many of the mentors interviewed. Training on alcohol and drug misuse was another important training need according to mentors and staff.

More than half of the mentors interviewed had also received mentoring training delivered by external organisations. Although the majority of mentors found aspects of this training useful it was noted that the training did not apply to Sacro's definition of mentoring:

M3: There was training delivered by Wise Group, and that was them saying, you never go into houses and all that. You always meet in public and that isn't the way that I've delivered my service. Even like if somebody has passed through the service and then contacts you to re-refer themselves. They were saying you can have a telephone conversation and that's it. They can't come back and I don't agree with that.

M5: Because we had a lot of discussion about the description of how they see a mentor is probably like this and what we do as a mentor is like this. It just doesn't fit. The feedback was useful though because we did mock meetings and the course tutor sat in on them and the feedback from that was really helpful and we had some after course work to do so that was helpful getting the feedback from that. But the training itself was good if you could pigeon hole what a mentor is but it just doesn't fit with what we do here.

Mentors reflected that training did not cover the role that they delivered at Sacro. This increase in availability of 'mentoring training' is indicative of the increasing prominence of mentoring as a service in the third sector and the recent funding that has been directed towards mentoring services in the UK. It also suggests that there may be a goal of standardising mentoring. One of these courses, for example, offers an accredited mentoring qualification, which may be of benefit for agencies who are keen to secure funding which is often limited in the third sector. It may be the case that mentors with a 'mentoring' qualification will be viewed as having expertise.

Accredited training may also reflect the increasing marketisation of services within the criminal justice sector, which as noted may also be the rationale for mentors undergoing CBT courses (Maguire 2012; Stacey 2012; Harper 2013). When there is competition for funding, an organisation that has this 'accredited' status may have an advantage over services that do not have this status, even if this training does not fit in with the service they are delivering. This 'accreditation' contributes to the service 'acting as if' it is delivering mentoring, in line with the imaginary penalties literature (Carlen 2008). If workers are recruited on the basis of having this qualification when it is not relevant to the role, women may not receive necessary support from mentors due to the lack of relevant experience. Accredited training courses are also likely to be

expensive for smaller voluntary organisations, when may result in these services being 'priced out' of offering their service to women. This reduces the likelihood of voluntary organisations with valuable skill bases being able to challenge statutory bodies, due to concerns with losing funding (Gelsthorpe 2009).

Definition of mentoring

Mentors involved in the Sacro mentoring service were asked how they would define mentoring:

M4: It's got lots of different meanings. It's changed a lot recently but it's a lot bigger recently after Elish Angiolini and the Commission report and things like that. From when I started as a mentor, the word mentor didn't ever really mean much. It was just another word for a worker. I never took much reference from it. Now mentoring is massive and it's a proper word and properly means something...You could really put it into a lot of things but definitely one to one, it's intensive and I would say that role modelling would be a massive element to it.

M3: As a mentor you are trying to influence somebody's behaviour. Rather than just spending time with them.

M5: Well I know there's already quite a few definitions however it's trying to keep it in context of what the true definition of a mentor is and what we do within Sacro because the two are completely different. If you're asking me to describe it in the role that I have, then everything to every girl really because it varies from person to person. A lot of the girls [...] have similar issues and are in similar situations whereby they are maybe homeless or need their benefits sorted out or have addiction problems, however if you're working with a girl and they're in crisis and it doesn't matter what that crisis might be, if you are the only person that she has to come to then you help her deal with that crisis. So it could be anything. It could be a shoulder to cry on, it could be a taxi for the day, it could be liaising between her and another service, or her and family members. It could be wiping away her tears. It could be anything. So it's really difficult to put a definition on it.

It is clear from these accounts that mentors have difficulty defining 'mentoring', but generally mentors and staff agreed that mentoring was one to one, intensive support focused on the needs of the individual. A small number of mentors distinguished between mentoring and support work, and felt that they could not start 'mentoring' an individual at the beginning of the relationship. Instead, at the start of the relationship it was about doing things 'for' the woman until she was ready to do certain things herself.

Staff generally defined mentoring by the specific activities involved rather than allocating a conceptual meaning to the term such as 'an experienced and trusted advisor' (Oxford Dictionary 2015). M4 highlighted how the label of 'mentor' has become important due to the increasing popularity of mentoring in the criminal justice sector. Prior to this increased focus on mentoring she viewed her role as equivalent to that of a support worker. The mentor (M5) stated that she understands the 'true' definition of mentoring to be different to the service that she and other Sacro mentors deliver. While the definition of a mentor, 'an experienced and trusted advisor' implies that a person adapts their behaviour through advice from a mentor, the actual role of mentors at Sacro involved responding to crisis situations related to problems in the welfare system and beyond the control of the individual. It could be argued that this discrepancy between 'mentoring' and what Sacro actually practice is reflective of similar tensions to that described by Carlen (2008), when she discussed imaginary penalties. Staff are aware that they are not delivering 'mentoring' because it is not possible due to the crisis situations which many of the women they work with are currently experiencing. However, they are aware of the funding and policy that favours mentoring and so must act as if they are delivering mentoring because mentoring is 'marketable' and meets the priority of statutory funders.

Women who used the mentoring service defined a mentor as:

Alana: Support basically. Encouragement, someone who is like on your side in order for you to try and progress.

Jacqui: Someone that is there to advise you and help you out and gab away to you and things like that. Letting you know what help is there for you. Like housing issues and even addictions, training courses.

Barbara: Someone that helps you to stay on the right path, makes sure you're ok, helps you make the right choices so you don't reoffend or end up back in prison.

The definitions presented by the women highlighted the relational aspects of the support. Advice, encouragement and support defined the role of a mentor, similar to a befriending role where the focus is on building a relationship and reducing social isolation (Scottish Mentoring Network 2016). Previous research of mentoring has supported the view of Clutterbuck that mentors can be defined as role models (Tierney and Grossmann 2000; Newburn and Shiner 2006; Bateman 2008; Trotter 2011; Angiolini et al. 2012). However, women who used the mentoring service did not describe their mentor as a role model, but often as a 'friend':

Christine: I don't even see it as a support worker, I see it like it's...my best pal. That's what it's like. My best pal. Because you become close and you get to know each other.

Debbie: We've got an amazing friendship.

Rachel: I would say she is more a friend than a worker.

For some women, the relationship with their mentor was 'like a friendship' rather than being a 'real' friendship, suggesting that they understood that their relationship had boundaries:

Alana: You have to be firm, like stand your ground basically. Be a friend, but not too much of a friend. Like how can I explain it? A friend with boundaries.

Claire: You can talk to them, you can...I don't know...they can become just like your friend...like a friend. They're just there for you when you need them and that and you don't get that. I couldn't say that I could go into social work and do that with a social worker.

This is in line with previous research where women in prison who were paired with a mentor viewed their mentor as friend with boundaries and did not describe their mentors as role models (Brown and Ross 2010a; Keating 2012). Some mentors felt that it was inappropriate to be viewed as a friend whereas others believed that it was a by-product of doing the job well. Many also felt that although women might describe their mentor as a friend they understood that it was a professional relationship. Brown and Ross (2010a) suggest that this perception of the mentor as a 'friend' may be related to associating characteristics such as 'non-judgemental' and 'honest' to a defined model of friendship. Most of the women also described their mentors as being non-judgemental:

Rachel: She doesn't look down on you or anything. I could be sitting just now in my pyjamas and hair everywhere and it wouldn't bother me because she wouldn't say 'you should have seen her today.'

Mentors and social work staff were more likely to describe their support as role modelling than women who used the service, again highlighting a discrepancy between what the women experienced and what the mentors perceived mentoring to be based on:

M1: Probably another word for it is a role model...most of my clients are very isolated and the people that they did have in their life were people that were involved in drugs and alcohol and that kind of thing, and they've not really had anyone that has been a good role model. Someone that they can learn from, or can aspire to, to learn skills from or qualities and things like that. So I think it's about being a positive role model.

The description of the role modelling aspect of mentoring by the mentor (M1) contains components that have been associated with a befriending role. One mentor felt uneasy with the term role model as it suggested there was an unequal power balance in the relationship:

M6: I think it is good to be a role model for the women but I struggle with that because sometimes I think that that implies I'm above them. They

shouldn't aspire to be who I am or who other workers are. I just think it should be that they should aspire to make other choices.

The association of role model with mentor may be specifically suited to youth mentoring. Commonly in these projects, youths are paired with an older person. Peer mentoring may also have the potential for mentors to be viewed as role models due to their shared offending history and similar backgrounds to the people they mentor. The term 'role-model' also implies that there will be disclosure from the mentor about their personal experiences and how they overcame difficult circumstances. The gap in shared experiences due to 'class' differences might explain why women do not view their mentor as a role model. Many of the mentors were younger than women using the service and educated, and had not experienced the marginalisation and disadvantage that was present in the lives of many of the women who worked with Sacro. One Sacro staff member recognised that age could prevent a mentor being viewed as a role model:

Mngr1: The only barrier I would say there is if we have maybe an older woman who finds it difficult taking advice and guidance from someone half her age. Or similarly if we had an older mentor paired up with a younger service user who would benefit more from role modelling from a younger mentor.

The perception of women as 'friend' and not a 'role-model' may also reflect that social isolation is a key issue for women and not a skills deficit. Women may not require a role model because their difficulties are not a result of irrational behaviour or flawed thinking, but what they do value is having someone to talk to about their concerns.

Accounts from mentors and women who use the service have shown that mentoring encompasses different roles and can provide a range of support. Although this flexible definition of mentoring may be beneficial for mentees as it allows their support to be adapted, a lack of clarity also makes service evaluation difficult. The definitions provided by mentors are in line with the definition provided by the Commission on Women Offenders (Angiolini 2012) as 'a trusted one-to-one relationship where practical and emotional support is provided by the mentor on a wide range of issues relating to offending behaviour' because this definition includes 'any' type of support

viewed to be related to offending and is therefore flexible. However, there is a lack of theoretical basis within the definition and it is not clear how this differs from befriending or support work. It can be argued that the definition of mentoring is unclear because of the influences from various sectors. For example, the Commission report that its definition of mentoring has a remit centred around 'offending related behaviours' whereas The Scottish Mentoring Network, is focused on mentoring more generally. This may present confusion around what the specific definition of mentoring is and what it is about mentoring that is of value. While examining the mentoring process throughout the remainder of this chapter, the definition and role of mentoring will be examined further to explore how these definitions are in line with the service delivered.

Matching, first meeting and early engagement

Mentors had, on average, a caseload of approximately 15-20 women at one time. Paid mentors were allocated women based on their caseload, rather than matching based on characteristics such as interests, background or age. This differs from the matching process documented in previous research where volunteer mentors were matched with women based on their interests and age (Brown and Ross 2010a; Salgado et al. 2010).

Many of the women in the present study accessed mentoring through recommendation from their social worker and were not clear about the type of support that the mentoring service offered. When women were asked what support they needed from their mentor in the initial stages of the mentoring relationship, 16 women stated that they were seeking practical support. Specifically, this type of support included: transport/support to appointments; help organising bills and support needed on day of release from prison:

Fiona: just day to day things and if I had any problems she would be like 'get your bills together and we'll sort them out' because (I've not been doing it lately) but usually I just put them to the side...(bills) that's no helping.

Nine of these women stated that they were also seeking emotional support and only four women stated that they were only looking for emotional support only from their mentor in the early stages of the relationship:

Louise: To be honest I needed a bit of support and someone to talk to because obviously my history and what I was going through. I've not got any friends or anything. My partner was in jail so I had no one really to talk to. So it was just basically for someone to talk to.

Mentors perceived practical support to be essential for early engagement in mentoring. A number of mentors believed that women would not view the service as having any value for them if it could not do something 'for' them at least in the early stages of the relationship.

First meetings between the mentor and mentee varied in structure. The mentoring service based in Glasgow, for example, would normally involve a 3-way meeting between the woman, criminal justice social worker and mentor, to introduce the woman to the service, and present her with the opportunity to decide whether she would like to participate in mentoring. However, if a woman showed interest in participating in the service at this stage, it did not always lead to a second meeting with the mentor. According to some mentors, many of the women who showed interest at this stage did not attend a further appointment with the mentor. The proportion of women who showed interest and did not attend was not included in the KPI data and therefore is unknown. Mentors stated that sometimes women already had support in place and did not need the further support of a mentor, however they attended the appointment because they did not want to appear uncooperative with their social worker. Views of women who did not take up the service would have been more informative about the reasons for not attending further appointments. However as noted in the Chapter 4 there were access difficulties. This suggests that the statutory involvement may have impacted on whether women showed an interest in mentoring, which may undermine the 'voluntary aspect' of engagement with mentoring.

Although it was intended that an action plan would be developed in the first meeting, mentors stated that this did not always happen and it could be unhelpful to present a high volume of paperwork at an initial meeting. Here a mentor describes how she usually approached first meetings with new women:

M7: I'm hoping that I can establish a relationship, an atmosphere where she feels willing to talk. If she never does, then I have to respect that too but just trying to find out 'who are you? What do you need?' I haven't done the first assessment yet. What I normally do is go on a first visit and just talk. Usually you find on a first visit, they want to talk to you. So it's listening. But it's just talking about the service. Next time I come, we'll do an assessment, we've got the paperwork out the way, we'll maybe build an action plan.

This again demonstrates the flexibility around the components of the service. This quote shows how important communication is in the early stages for establishing a relationship and the importance of informality. It also highlights the power imbalance between the mentor and woman, as the mentor already has prior knowledge about the women's personal relationships. This is because the service user in this example was referred from another Sacro service. Although mentors stressed that they attempted to keep the relationship as equal as possible, the mentor will also have more power than the woman due to their professional role and their collecting and reporting of data in relation to meetings, suggesting that this 'equal' relationship may be another imaginary penalty (Carlen 2008).

Goals of mentoring

The majority of women stated that they set goals with their mentor and worked towards them throughout the mentoring relationship. These goals were normally recorded by the mentor and mentee as part of an action plan. Women who used the service indicated that goal setting was not always a formal process, and that goals could change. For example:

Rachel: The goals change because my mood changes so I try and prioritise and write everything down now. My main goal was getting [my daughter] back into school which I did do [...] I achieved that but then I had to decide whether I wanted to stay in Uddingston or Motherwell. I was all mixed up then, I didn't know where I wanted to go. So all my goals are all different every week now. They change day by day.

Another woman stated that she had not yet set goals with her mentor. She had been in contact with her mentor for three months but her low mood had prevented her from feeling able to set specific goals:

Louise: No we've not set any [goals] yet because I've told her my mental state...I'm on a sickness benefit and all that...but I'm going to say to her about getting myself out and about because it's not helping. She has offered, don't get me wrong. But I've said at that particular time, my mental health, it's not very good when she asked me. But she's willing to refer me to as many people as she can. A woman's group mentoring, I didn't go to it though because I wasn't feeling up to it at that point.

It was clear from the accounts of mentors that setting goals was not a straightforward process as explained by a mentor here:

M5: Yeah I mean, when you first meet with them you're meant to do the Homes Matrix and kind of set your goals and action plan from that. And sometimes we can, sometimes we can't. With the best laid plans in the world, sometimes it doesn't work that way. For a lot of the girls, it's one step forward and then 3 steps back. So their goal might be to get into college or back into some form of education or work. Then they may start using again or they may lose their house or their benefits get stopped so then you've got to kind of deal with that before you go on and try and get them to the goal that they initially thought they wanted.

These accounts give examples of structural barriers that are preventing the women from achieving their goals. The quote from M5 highlights that even though they are expected to complete a Homes Matrix assessment and set goals early in the mentoring relationship, this does not always happen. Goal setting has been argued to be one of the unique components of mentoring compared to other services, however it did not appear to be key in the current study (Trotter 2011; Hucklesby and Wincup 2014). Hucklesby and Wincup (2014) state that mentoring appears to be distinct from befriending 'in that it involves working to clearly defined goals and within set time frames rather than developing a more informal and supportive social relationship.' Therefore, if mentoring conforms to this definition, then goals should be a central

focus of the service. The difficulty with setting goals in this mentoring service likely reflects the social circumstances of the women that mentors worked with and the lack of control that women had over any goals they set. Trotter (2011) also agreed that the setting of goals and strategies to achieve them is an important component of mentoring. Other projects that work with women in the criminal justice system have identified goal setting as a key component of the support. For example, keeping a record of goals achieved can be used by women to look back on past achievements and gain confidence from their ability to reach their goals (Eaton 1993). It may be that mentors create actions plans because they are required to as part of mentoring but at the same time, they know that there are more urgent issues to resolve, which may represent another imaginary penalty (Carlen 2008).

The difficulty of transition from prison to the community was highlighted by one of the mentors as being a barrier to goal setting:

M2: Females that have a drug addiction and were clean in prison, you always try to reiterate the pressure of being back in the community, back in your old life and the offers you're going to get, 'no I'm staying away, no I'm staying away' the kind of pressures there are even bigger, they don't have the safety net of the prison there. It's difficult, so the priorities then change straight away. It can change within minutes to when they've been released.

The importance of setting goals that were achievable was noted by mentors and when goals were set, they tended to be quite informal. They stated that women should be encouraged to work towards meeting goals at their own pace:

M11: Once they're past crisis intervention, the goals would be 'right by the time I see you next week I want you to have made this GP appointment. I want you to have done something good for yourself, went out and you know got yourself something nice', wee goals like that. I mean it's baby steps at a time with the women. It's all about their confidence and their independence and you know when you see the women they're very overwhelmed so giving them too much to do is just going to break them.

The most common goals identified by women in the interviews were to gain employment or undertake volunteer work but they often viewed this as a long-term goal. Many of the women did not feel they would be able to work in the near future. Other long-term goals held by women were to regain care of their children; build relationships with children and become drug free. Mentors also generally stated that these types of goals could not always be achieved throughout the duration of mentoring and that the service could not always make a substantial impact on areas such as employment. The types of goals that women in the present study were aiming to realise did not give an indication that these women were 'offenders.' None of the goals can be described as offence focused goals. Rarely did women state that their main goal was to stop offending, suggesting that offending was related to other issues and not impulsive or motivated by hedonistic reasons. The aspirations of women reflected their marginalisation such as trying to access temporary accommodation where they felt safe and regaining contact with children.

Accounts from mentors, differed from the women's accounts when they spoke about working towards goals that are related to the development of skills and confidence of the women. Mentors were more likely to relate goals to changes in behaviour and attitudes, than the women who used the service. Some mentors spoke about helping the woman to make better choices, or helping the woman to become a responsible citizen and exhibiting socially acceptable behaviours. Again, these 'goals' were not formally recorded in an action plan but were viewed as the long-term goal of the service and may be indicative of the underlying theoretical assumptions of mentoring:

Mngr5: The long-term ultimate outcome is for women to stay out of trouble so to reduce reoffending to get on with their lives, to be responsible citizens.

M5: Ultimately it's hoping that their lives can be offence free, stay out of prison, socially acceptable behaviours and good relationships in their community.

As identified in the previous chapter: finance, housing, drug/alcohol misuse, mental health and relationships were the most common needs identified by mentors and staff. They also highlighted structural issues such as victimisation and poverty and

acknowledged how circumstances could impact on positive outcomes. A deficit in 'skills' was not introduced at this stage, however, when asked to state the goals of mentoring, many staff spoke about the importance of skills development. According to mentors and social work staff a key aim of mentoring was the improvement of a range of skills including social skills, life skills, decision-making skills and the 'skills to trust somebody.'

Although women who used the service generally did not talk about their offending as a consequence of bad decision making, some accounts from staff indicated that there was a belief that women had made the 'wrong' choice and mentors aimed to give women information that would lead to 'better' choices:

M2: I see myself as someone that has life experiences and local knowledge of [local area] and of other services and would share that with an individual so that they have as much of an informed choice...everybody has the right to live the life that they choose and as long as they've got the information given then they can give an informed choice.

M11: Because sometimes you feel, god I'm going home to my cosy bed and my cooked meal and things like that and some of the women are worrying about how they're going to get through the night. So it's trying not to take it home with you...It is difficult but it's down to the lifestyle choices I made as well that's got me to where I am, but it's obviously down to my childhood and how I was brought up and that isn't the women's fault for how they've been brought up and their childhood so it is hard not to take it home and beat yourself up about it.

These accounts indicate that mentors are empathetic about the difficult circumstances in the lives of the women they work with. They also suggest that a key role of the mentor is to influence the decision making skills of the women they work with. The informational aspect of mentoring is highlighted as important in the decision making processes of the women. It suggests that a lack of information about how they can improve their situation has resulted in the women making choices that have led to undesirable consequences. This is in line with Pollack's (2007) research that understands criminal justice support to be part of responsabilising strategy. Women

are provided with information and support that is expected to help them make 'better' decisions and self-reform.

This focus on individual choice combined with an understanding of the difficult circumstances in the lives of the women may reflect the inability of the mentoring service to address these structural issues outside of the criminal justice system which had been previously described as prominent needs for the women who accessed mentoring. This is consistent with the research by Corcoran and Fox (2013) who reported in an evaluation of a community based service for women that staff expressed viewpoints with incompatible theoretical underpinnings. The language used by mentors and staff reflected that of an individualised approach:

Mngr1: They want the attention and the affection and all the things that anyone would want from a relationship but they don't always make the right choices. Their decision making skills are maybe not as honed as they would be if they hadn't been through all the issues that they've been through.

Mngr4: It's actually trying to empower them to develop skills, positive relationships, positive activities and I see it as a guidance role for them to meet their full potential. It's just that wee bit of extra support for them to be able to do things on their own. Also for the mentoring it's maybe just giving them a wee bit more ambition for the future about the way they can be.

M5: Empower them to make better choices and better relationships and improve their social skills so that they're better equipped to lead a non-offending existence.

SW7: What I would hope to see is that a person who has been mentored comes out of the process more competent with improved capacity to problem solve and deal with day to day life issues, I suppose with improved life skills basically for coping with the ups and downs that come with life. It's a horrible word but pro-socially so that they're dealing productively with the benefits agency and getting the outcome that they need without break down, without running out the door and disengaging.

It is clear that mentors view skills development as a key aspect of mentoring including social skills and life skills. According to these accounts, the result of empowerment is an ability to make 'better choices.' There is a lack of consideration of context here. That is not to say that mentors did not understand that the women they worked with did have difficult circumstances, however the mentoring intervention is focused on the individual and equipping the women to cope with these circumstances. One of the women being mentored viewed 'empowerment' as being a goal and it may be that it was used more by mentors because it is a word that is frequently used within the sector. Indeed, the one woman who did talk about hoping that she would become 'empowered' had previously worked in a professional support worker role similar to that of a mentor.

Young (1994: 48) understood there to be two understandings of empowerment: 'For some therapists and service providers, empowerment means the development of individual autonomy, self-control, and confidence; for others empowerment refers to the development of a sense of collective influence over the social conditions of one's life.' The type of empowerment that mentors were aiming to achieve appears to be related to 'individual autonomy, self-control and confidence.' The understanding of empowerment that mentors were seeking is also similar to the definition put forward by Pollack (2000) who argues that in the criminal justice system to be empowered is to 'feel' in control of their lives rather actually being in control of social conditions.

This language of 'empowerment' and 'life skills' have been considered to be reflective of responsibilising strategies (Hannah-Moffat and Innocente 2013). Rather than viewing external circumstances and poverty as the key cause of women's disadvantage and subsequent offending these accounts from mentors suggest that women's disadvantage is caused by their lack of skills. This is in line with the research of Pollack (2005) who draws on Rose (2000) when arguing that services for women are focused on creating a 'responsible citizen.' There is an implication from mentors' accounts that a lack of social and decision making skills are the cause of offending, which in turn leads to an acceptance of the structural inequalities that have contributed to the criminalisation of women.

Mentoring activities

The activities that were most frequently mentioned by women who used the Sacro mentoring service were: accompaniment to appointments; referral to other agencies; setting up benefits and 'having a chat'. Other activities included: budget plans; making phone calls; teaching new skills (e.g. form filling, talking on the telephone to agencies, CV writing); and speaking on behalf of the woman to other agencies.

Practical support

As previously noted, practical support was a key component of the mentoring relationship, especially when a woman was leaving prison and the mentor met her at the prison gate, as described by a woman here:

Stephanie: She also made arrangements to meet me on the day of my release and also she was in contact with other agencies [...] she was in close contact with the lady who has the house so she made the arrangements to meet someone who was going to hand over the keys for here. [...] she had contacts with another agency, to take me somewhere they give people second hand clothes like a basic number of articles per person without any clothing and even on the same day amazingly she had made arrangements for me to have food parcels. Honestly all in the same day. All that happened like in a dream.

Mentors and social work staff stated that the provision of practical support facilitated the building of a trusting relationship. It demonstrated that mentors were reliable and understood the needs of the women. Mentors often provided transport to appointments for women, however four mentors stated that they had to put strict boundaries in place at times to prevent women just viewing them as a 'taxi service.' It was noted by one mentor that part of the role could involve being a 'taxi' for the day as long as this was not a regular occurrence.

Much of the practical support was related to the financial hardship experienced by women and mentors attempting to resolve problems that existed outside of the criminal justice system. In some instances, this involved phoning the job centre and setting up welfare benefits for the woman, or helping her to plan budgets. There were occasions when mentors advised women on what benefits were available to them: for

example, one woman who had her benefits reduced in error, experienced months of reduced benefits and she believed that the letter from her mentor (to her doctor) resulted in her benefits being reinstated. This provides an example of a mentor advocating on behalf of the woman, and may be an example of bonding social capital as the mentor had influenced the resources available to the woman through speaking on her behalf. This also highlights the failure of the welfare system in itself and the role of mentors in attempting to address these problems. Mentors also identified situations when they had acted as a link between agencies. For example, attending a housing meeting and helping the woman to put her point across, or discussing the meeting together afterwards. These types of links that the mentor provided between the woman and agency may loosely resemble the concept of bridging social capital, however it remains to be seen whether they can contribute to long-term changes in the lives of the women.

Mentors generally stated that the two most important practical issues that they supported women with were housing and benefit payments and applications. Support with housing was more common with women who had recently left prison. The following quote suggests that accommodation can be so scarce in some areas of the country that 'any' accommodation is viewed as a positive outcome:

M11: So homelessness is quite high for the women. But it's good that because we're part of the women offenders' team, we have a housing officer that we can phone and say 'right one of our women is coming out of prison, or is homeless, can you get me accommodation?' She'll get you accommodation that day. So it's really good. It's quite a fast turnaround. It might just be a B & B but it's something to give them a roof over their head.

However, one mentor and one social work staff member stated that certain accommodation on offer to women was unsafe, and they understood that prison would be perceived by women in these circumstances to be a preferable environment. By unsafe they generally meant that women with addictions would be surrounded by other individuals using drugs and alcohol, making it difficult for these women with addictions not to use substances in that environment. This should be considered in the context of a high demand for temporary accommodation in Scotland, where approximately 10,000 households are classed as temporary (Scottish Government

2014). Although the accommodation is classed as 'temporary', the average time spent in temporary accommodation is 23 weeks, with 1 in 10 households spending longer than 12 months in temporary housing. In addition, the lack of funding available to improve the condition of this accommodation coupled with no statutory minimum standards for quality of temporary accommodation, suggests that this issue will remain for the foreseeable future (Shelter Scotland 2016).

Support with alcohol and drug use was also seen to be vital, for example, if the woman was not already on a methadone script then the mentor would attempt to fast track this process where possible using their own contacts.

Mentors also related this practical support to skills development. Some mentors stated that they would practice scenarios with a woman, then encourage her to undertake these tasks on her own:

M9: So there's a lot of women 'oh I've got this letter and there's a phone number and oh I canny phone.' That's fine, I'll phone, that's fine. It's the simplest things like that can stress a woman out because they haven't got the confidence and they feel they don't have the right words that they can use to phone up and say 'such and such has got an appointment, she's not quite sure where it is or what time it's at, can you confirm that?'...But they might go into a shop and say I'm just going to go and buy whatever, they've got the confidence to go and pick it up and take it to the till. 'Oh I can do it myself.' So it's about identifying their weaknesses and strengths and using that to work on the different areas that are there.

This quote shows the individualised approach that is taken in relation to working towards outcomes. In the case described by the mentor here, low confidence and communication skills are identified as the 'weakness' that needs to be worked on and this is achieved through helping the woman to undertake tasks, with the end goal of the woman undertaking these tasks on her own. The mentor describes the women as 'not having the right words.' This is also reflected when mentors described situations in which they aimed to improve the social skills of the women they were working with. The following is a comment from a mentor on the lack of appropriate communication skills of the woman in a meeting with an external agency:

M4: They always like us there [meetings with agencies] because it's someone to sit beside them, to fight their corner. Quite often you'll get them looking at you as if 'I don't know what they're saying' and you can explain it in a different way to them because you know your girl a lot better. You know what she understands, you know where she's coming from and a lot of the time they can't verbalise that. Whether they just physically can't do it, that they don't know how, or they get intimidated or that but sometimes I'll speak on their behalf. And you try not to do it as much because you want the girl to say her piece. But sometimes you'll say 'well I think what she's trying to say is' or 'what we've discussed is' and then she'll sit and go 'yeah that's what I want to say' kind of thing and they just can't quite say it.

This 'activity' correlates with the goals of mentors related to improving the social skills of the women they worked with. Mentors also worked with women to plan budgets which might be considered as a 'life skill':

Mngr5: they are getting assistance to budget money so therefore they are not having to go out and steal to end up getting into trouble.

This quote assumes that women are lacking the skills to budget their money and this leads to their offending. Rather than acknowledging the role of poverty in offending, their offence is linked to a lack of budgeting skills.

This perception of women not communicating appropriately may reflect the assumption that women should conform to specific behaviour norms in order to manage the difficulties in their lives. Pollack (2007) argued that CBT and therapy were strategies of responsabilisation as individuals are 'supported' to self-reform and adapt their behaviour to be in line with neo-liberal values. The process of mentors accompanying women to appointments with the aim of improving the style in which they communicate reflects an individualised framework and possibly a strategy of responsabilisation. If a woman continues to behave outwith behavioural norms (missing appointments) then she can be seen to be 'undeserving' of support because this is, understandably, frustrating for the mentor who is working within a specific remit:

M4: some [women] are massively appreciative and then you have the other scale which are women who, most of them have been through support services their whole life. Whether it's been from a child or whatever and they become very not demanding of you but they expect a lot from you. Things that maybe you would do for another person but you kind of feel yourself not willing to do for them to such an extent because they've maybe had it done 5 times before for them and they've not tried to do it themselves so you learn very quickly who those clients are [...] I'll maybe change my diary to pick them up and take them and then they decide 'nah' they can't be arsed or whatever like that or they've changed their mind and it does get frustrating sometimes, but at the same time you've got to remember they have very chaotic lives a lot of them.

Emotional support

Emotional support was viewed as being equally as important as practical support by the majority of mentors, staff and women who used the service. Some of the women stated that they felt comfortable confiding in their mentor about situations they may not want to share with family/friends or indicated that they may not have anyone else to confide in. This is described by two women:

Marie: I do really get along with her and I can talk to her about stuff that maybe I wouldn't say to [my boyfriend]. I can actually talk to [my mentor].

Diane: So you feel as if you've got that other side to the fact that it's professional, where you're having a trusting friendly chat with somebody when you actually need to have it because you've been keeping it to yourself or you've had nobody to talk to.

Emotional support was also evident in situations where mentors had gone beyond their mentoring role:

M5: She'd been hospitalised over Christmas and I had been going into see her. I was the only person going into see her over Christmas so for her that was obviously quite a big thing.

Linda: It was actual suicidal thoughts in my head that I couldn't handle and [my mentor's] like that, 'don't you ever sit like that again. It doesn't matter what time of night it is, you just text 'talk'' God love her. I remember it was a Saturday night [...] just out of the blue it came into my head and it scared me. I was really scared. See where you get people 'I'm going to kill myself' It wisnae like that, I couldnae get rid of it. So I'm standing in the kitchen, I was like I don't want to phone her but she did say...and [she] spoke to me and you know something we ended up laughing and talking about things like cooking and things like that. [She] just took that right out my mind and [she's] been great that way with me.

Mentors providing support outwith their specified role may impact on the outcomes of service delivery. Although this means that the service is very flexible, and this extra mile support is of great value to the women, it also highlights the difficulty of defining mentoring, as noted previously. This in turn can impact on policy and practice as this 'extra-mile' support is difficult to define and may be inconsistent between organisations and mentoring relationships. Therefore, policy may fail to identify this 'extra-mile' support as a component of mentoring.

Communication styles were also an important factor of emotional support. Several mentors spoke about effective methods of communication and the importance of informality in the relationship stating that they did not want to intimidate or overwhelm the woman by communicating in a way that may be viewed as interrogating:

M2: There's eye contact, we're actively listening and talking to one another but for some people they find that very intimidating because they are being interrogated, they are being questioned so...to have that in the car there's the odd eye contact, a lot of it is hand signals that you are actually listening. You reaffirm to what they have been saying, it's off the cuff.

Many of the women that Sacro mentors worked with experienced anxiety and therefore did not feel able to leave the house to attend appointments. The emotional support from the mentor could assist the woman to leave the house and attend important appointments, for example, at the job centre, GP, counselling, court or social work.

Relationships

Although mentors generally felt that abusive and negative relationships were a consistent feature in the lives of the women, and greatly impacted on their circumstances, they did not view it to be their role to focus on the women's relationships:

M3: Relationships, that's a really difficult one, I don't think as a mentor, it's my place to comment on somebody's personal relationships. Even if someone was telling me they were being battered on a daily basis by their husband, I would never say 'you need to leave him' because that's not my place. I could say, there's help out there and if you decide to leave him I'm there to back you up but I don't think relationships...I think the majority of our women, you look at social work and all the different input they've had probably for years. They've actually got nothing that they've got control over. So their relationships and who they confide to is one of the very few things. So aye I probably wouldn't get involved in relationships.

Some mentors stated that they understood that women could not always control the relationships they were involved in, especially if it left the woman isolated. Although some women in the present study did acknowledge an effort to avoid specific individuals who they associated with their drug taking there was not a deliberate focus on relationships by mentors during the mentoring process:

M8: I don't say this to them but sometimes what I'm thinking is actually 'it would be beneficial for you not to have this person in your life anymore' but I know obviously things aren't as easy as that and I think all of us can relate that it is better the devil you know. It's easier to stay in a situation than go into something that you don't know that you're going to have no friends because actually it's better having some kind of crappy friends than having no friends.

The majority of women agreed that relationships were not one of the main areas that they discussed with their mentors. They sometimes spoke to their mentors about their relationships, and it helped to gain the perspective of their mentor:

Karen: I've spoke to her about the relationship with [my partner]. What had happened when he got out of prison and that...What they think, the way I should be treated, is that normal to be treated like that? Because I'm thinking to myself is it me or is it not me? But she went through all that with me.

Although mentors did not perceive it to be part of their role to focus directly on problematic relationships that women were involved in, they did attempt to help women to form new relationships, indirectly in some instances. Linking women in with social groups was viewed as a link to new social networks:

M6: I would always kind of...always find out what they're like, how they are and what they're interested in instead of just going to general groups but it's worked. I mean I have a woman who loved walking and like takes photographs everywhere she goes, so the Willow Centre¹⁷ had a photography group so I got her linked in there and now she's going to her photography group by herself. Like one outside criminal justice and she does a walking group as well.

This is one way in which mentors attempted to increase the social networks and social capital of the women. Meeting other individuals through classes and activities is a route for women to access new social networks. However, the group work that women were involved in was often directed towards women in the criminal justice system. Therefore, it would be unlikely that women would have opportunities to build networks that have been argued to be required to gain bridging social capital. Bridging social capital is arguably gained through social connections with individuals from different backgrounds which can then lead to new information that will increase resources (Warr 2006).

Contribution of volunteer mentors

One of the potential benefits of mentoring in criminal justice services is the cost effectiveness when volunteer mentors are used. Sacro staff involved in the

¹⁷ The Willow Service is a partnership between NHS Lothian, City of Edinburgh Council and Sacro that aims to address the social, health and welfare needs of women in the criminal justice system through the provision of range of services.

coordination and management of volunteer mentors stated that the main benefits of having volunteers in the service was that it allowed support for the woman to be sustained after the majority or practical pieces of work had been completed. Volunteers were also valued because of their ability to view a situation from a different perspective, and the perception that they offered links to the wider community. The following Sacro staff member describes how one of the aims of using volunteers was to raise awareness about the issues that women face:

Mngr6: It takes away the sense that these service users are in a different world, so somebody just talking about their experience generally to friends, family or community, a sense of 'I didn't know that went on, I didn't know some of the issues people face' If it helps people to think about these things then... and I think without the volunteers quite often it's easier for the community to say 'well people have a paid job to do that, it must be a hard job, it must be very difficult' but it's something different when someone says 'I chose to do this, I don't get paid for it, I like doing it, I enjoy it, I get something out of it, and it makes a difference to people.'

At the time of fieldwork, volunteering was spoken about by staff as an area for development. The majority of volunteer mentors were students who viewed the role as an opportunity to gain experience which would be valuable to them when applying for full-time jobs in the sector. In addition to students, one volunteer mentor was retired with extensive professional experience in the criminal justice field, and others had taken a break from paid employment to be caregivers to children. They were also volunteering to gain experience that they hoped could assist with gaining full-time employment.

At Sacro, volunteer mentors were introduced towards the end of the mentoring relationship, when the majority of practical support had been provided by the paid mentor. Mentors describe the role of volunteer mentors:

M9: We wouldn't be expecting volunteers to do matrix assessments or anything like that. It's literally just a case of 'right what did you do with such and such?' – 'we went for a coffee and she wanted to go to her knitting class so I helped her with that and I helped her with her shopping.'

M3: They're [volunteers] more at the exit I think initially, unless somebody is quite stable anyway. But I don't think volunteers in general have got the experience to deal with the real crisis. I don't think it's actually fair to ask a volunteer to go in and work with somebody who is constantly in crisis because it's dead wearing.

Paid mentors who previously volunteered as mentors at Sacro, stated that as a volunteer they participated in more social activities due to their increased time availability:

M1: It's just about going out and spending time with them and getting to know them and because I've noticed a big difference, because when I volunteered that whole hour, you're not doing anything other than talking or sharing an interest or going to do something. So you really are getting to know them and you build a relationship really quite quickly because there's no distractions which is really good. And it's good that they get linked in once all the practical stuff is sorted in a way.

Due to the smaller number of volunteers compared to mentees, it was normally only possible to match volunteers to mentees based on the availability of volunteers and their proximity to the mentee. On the occasions when matching was possible, staff would aim to match the woman with a mentor on the basis of interests or background (e.g. both young mothers):

M4: I'm just writing a case study about a girl just now, and she has a young son and was struggling at the parental side so I linked her in with a young mum [volunteer] as well because yeah they've got to obviously keep their professional boundaries and that but even if it's a couple of words from her or a wee idea or something...so things like that as a role model and how she deals with her son. For her to say 'actually I go through the exact same thing, it is hard, it's not just you. I'm struggling.'

Not all women were allocated a volunteer mentor, partly due to low numbers of volunteers. There were various reasons put forward by Sacro staff as to why volunteer mentors were not introduced at the start of mentoring relationships. The reasons

included: volunteers did not have adequate experience for dealing with crises; it would be unfair to expect unpaid staff to deal with crisis and volunteers were limited to using public transport with women, restricting the type of support that they could offer. These barriers to working solely with volunteer mentors have also been stated in other mentoring projects in the criminal justice system (Hucklesby and Wincup 2014).

There were differing views on the role of the volunteer mentors among staff, with some stating that the volunteer role was similar to a befriending role, while others stated that volunteers must also provide practical support. The two women who did have volunteer mentors in the present study both perceived their volunteer mentors to be unreliable on occasion. Although the following woman was currently having a positive relationship with her volunteer mentor, she reflected on a disappointing experience with a previous volunteer:

Christine: Every time we were meant to go out she always had something on and then I would have money and go and buy drink with that, rather than keep the money to go and do something good...Well the way I see it, see voluntary people. Voluntary people can back out at any time but people that's got a job really need to do that job basically.

This quote shows the impact that unreliability of a volunteer mentor can have on the woman. She viewed paid mentors more positively because of their obligation to attend meetings and subsequently she trusted paid staff to a greater extent than volunteers. Another woman had also been allocated a volunteer and had only met with her twice before the volunteer mentor decided that she could not participate in the scheme anymore. This reduced commitment and accountability compared to paid workers was also noted by Wilczynski et al. (2003). The impact of unreliable volunteer mentors was also highlighted by a manager:

Mngr1: If you're not going to stick it out then please don't allow us to link you in because the impact that could have on the woman could be a negative one. When it's part of the exit strategy they tend to be at a more positive place in their life, they don't want our work to be a negative impact on them at all.

All of the women were asked for their views on volunteer mentors, even when they had not worked with one. The majority of women stated that they would not view a volunteer any differently from a paid member of staff and felt they would all do the job to the best of their ability. One woman described why she would feel guilty if her mentor was a volunteer:

Diane: I felt a burden to my family with all of these things so I would probably feel guilty if it was a volunteer. I probably would feel guilty if someone was doing all of that for me and they weren't getting paid for it, I probably would. I would think, that's a lot to put on someone if they're not getting paid for it.

However, it should be noted that although there was a perception in these instances that volunteers were unreliable, it may be that the expectations placed on volunteers were inappropriate. Two women reported that they thought their paid mentor was a volunteer. The expectations placed on volunteer mentors by the women they are working with may be equal to their expectations of a paid worker. This could result in feelings of being let down when they do not meet these expectations, which may be unrealistic for a volunteer to meet due to other demands on their time. There is also the issue of volunteers being asked to do this type of intensive work when they are not being paid. The label of volunteer did not appear to be important to the majority of women. However, as most women did not have experience of working with a volunteer mentor, it may be that their view would change if they had this experience.

Valued characteristics of mentors

The characteristics of mentors that were valued most commonly by women were being 'non-judgemental' and a 'good listener.' Other characteristics that were frequently reported to be important were being happy/positive, honest, patient and not authoritative or dictatorial.

Stephanie: I appreciate the practical support that she's given, but the fact that she's such a genuinely kind person, the fact that she's always so cheerful.

Julie: I might go in and see her and I meet up with her and I'm in a bit of a mood but she soon cheers me up and I think it's about sense of humour and about being bubbly and I think that's what makes people go as well and want to come for the support.

The majority of women stated that it was not important that mentors did not have shared life experiences such as being in prison or subject to statutory supervision. This may be due to the gratitude that the women felt towards their mentors for the support that they had received and the non-judgemental approach in which it was delivered.

One woman stated that she did not want to change her current mentor, but that her mentor could not support her to attend Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings. She stated that she would have benefitted from having an additional support for AA meetings. It was important for this woman that only someone who understood her alcohol dependency attended these meetings with her. Another woman stated that for her, age and experience was important:

Rachel: It has to be the right people. I think you need the right people to do this job. If someone came in and didn't have a clue about the community and all that I wouldn't talk to her because it would be like talking to someone who doesn't have a clue. You need to know what it's like or even have a wee idea what it's like to understand addictions and mental health issues. See if a wee lassie came in at 23 and sat there and tried to tell me, she wouldn't have a clue and I just wouldn't even take her up on it. I'd be like that, she's 23 and never even took a drug in her life and trying to tell me.

These valued characteristics are in line with other research that has explored clients' experiences of support workers and also social workers (Barry 2000; Malloch and McIvor 2011; Burgess et al. 2011; Ipsos MORI 2015). In these studies, clients value most, workers most who were non-judgemental, caring, relaxed, a good listener, a friend and treated them as an equal.

Multi-agency working

The majority of women were in regular contact with at least one other agency in addition to their statutory appointments with social workers. The types of agencies included: addiction services; counselling; victim support; stress centre; social work group work; Sacro group work and one stop shops¹⁸. A small number of mentors spoke about the difficulties they had with other agencies on occasion and how this could have a detrimental effect on their attempts to engage with women:

M2: The difficulties I have had is statutory bureaucracy in putting up barriers to forming a relationship with an individual. You can't be there at that certain time, or no this needs to happen, which can put up a barrier. It could be if you go to prison, the individual is on...they've done something...which is quite right, prison have their policies and procedures and risk assessments but you're behind a glass wall. Fair enough but that's a barrier for forming a relationship if you're behind a glass. So yeah that's a difficulty.

Another mentor spoke about the effect that other agencies could have on the outcomes for the mentee:

M4: a lot of the time it's other agencies that let you down. And you think, I've done all this work, and this girl's done all this work and then this one person, this one agency - social worker, caseworker, whoever it is hasn't pulled their weight or have made this girl feel really down and have put her right back at the police or the court.

As mentoring is usually part of a package of interventions, this raises the question of what makes mentoring different from other services that women had been in contact with. According to women, time and emotional support were the key differences between mentoring and other services:

¹⁸ A one stop shop offers a variety of different services at one location such as housing services, addictions services, and health services.

Claire: I think it's maybe, 1: they [other services] don't have the time...to get to know you to a deeper level, 2: I just think as well because they're more authoritative they like to keep it like the line there, and not to cross it.

That is not to say that workers from other agencies did not offer any emotional support, but generally mentors were more flexible with their time than workers from other agencies.

As the majority of women also met with a social worker on a regular basis as part of the conditions of their statutory order, it is important to explore the differences between the two roles. Any positive changes seen to result from mentoring may not be due to mentoring solely, but due to other types of support such as that provided by social work. Social work staff generally stated that there were small overlaps in roles. For example, it was also part of a social worker's role to refer to other agencies. Generally, the social workers stated that mentors complemented their role and, with the demands on their time, mentors were able to offer the types of practical support that social workers did not have time to provide:

SW5: Mentors are such a help because as much as I'm meant to have more time, even so I actually don't because you get told you're going to have 15 cases and then you end up with more and so I do have more time than other social workers but I still don't have that much time, so I think it's a completely different role for a start. There might be small cross overs but I just find the mentors so helpful and can perhaps deal with some practical issues that maybe you're just...and they've got so much knowledge and know where things are and my knowledge is limited to the east whereas they know about all over the city. I think they can have a most trustful relationship with the person because they're not part of social work.

These quotes suggest that key differences with the mentor role is their knowledge of services available across a large area, their ability to quickly develop a trusting relationship with the woman, and their ability to provide practical support that is outwith the social worker's capacity due to other demands on their time. It also highlights that practical support is a key aspect of mentoring in this context. Social work staff and mentors also noted the additional barrier to building a trusting

relationship with a worker from a statutory organisation. Women reported the relationship with social workers to be more official and authoritative. However, although some of the women reported having had negative experiences with social work others also reported positive relationships:

Fiona: Yes, I had a good probation officer right enough. She used to phone me every single day. She was good. We ended up kind of pals.

Rachel: It didn't turn out well at the start, I really felt like cat and dog because I thought she thought she knew everything and it was her way or no way. She wouldn't listen, you were a shoplifter and that was it but now that I know her and that, she is alright she's just doing her job.

Rachel's experience supports the view of the social workers that building trust takes time. She entered the relationship feeling negative about it, but over time the relationship has improved. Although there was this difference in relationships with statutory and voluntary services, not all staff shared the view that mentoring should always be part of the voluntary sector. Two social work staff respondents stated that the relationship was the important factor in service delivery, and not whether it was a statutory or voluntary service. It was their view that if mentoring was part of a statutory order, and the woman was therefore coerced to attend appointments, she would see the benefits of the service and want to continue to attend. As the present study has shown, however, women rarely attend every scheduled appointment with their mentor, and if it was made statutory then the flexibility of the service in terms of required engagement may be reduced. However, if it was delivered as a 'voluntary after care' service by the statutory sector then this would overcome the problem relating to mandatory appointments. Although this type of service may not be a priority for resource allocation.

The majority of mentors who were interviewed disagreed with the view that mentoring would work if it was a statutory service due to women's negative experiences with the Children and Families social work department. Mentors also stated that the power that the statutory service had to report women for breaching their statutory order and remove their children from their care meant that women would not engage with a mentor who was part of this statutory system. It can be argued that there is an

element of coercion in any mentoring project that has this kind of connection with the statutory sector and is part of the system in this way. Although the majority of Sacro staff maintained that it was a voluntary service, there were a small number who acknowledged that it did have a coercive element:

Mngr3: I should say that we work very very closely with social work and we would report things that would, that might result in women ending up back inside [prison] for example. There's no way that we're there to ignore any breaches and court orders or anything like that, especially if it concerns somebody else being put at risk, a child for example. But the women don't seem to think too much about that relationship we have with social work. Whether they actually know that we're working with social work, or so closely with them I don't know. The fact is, that we're part of that system as well, although we're maybe not seen that way by the women.

M3: I've had really difficult conversations at meetings saying, 'see if they have to be on an order is that actually a mentoring service, or is that an extension of policing?' [...] I think there's got to be solely, there has to be totally voluntary for the women to engage and if she doesn't engage that must have absolutely no detrimental effect on her. Whereas if it's statutory and you've got to report her back to the social worker.

This demonstrates the close relationship between Sacro and statutory funders which can undermine their independence. The majority of women interviewed stated that they knew their mentor would have to report information to their social worker if they stated that they or someone else was at risk of harm but they understood all other information shared to be confidential. However, it is unclear if this is entirely accurate, especially with information sharing between agencies as noted by a mentor here:

M6: There's women that I work with who are working with the Willow service and social work or DTTO [Drug Treatment and Testing Order], every week I'm in contact with other workers. That's difficult I think when it's really close partnership working. That's when I find it difficult with what stays confidential and what information you share so I think that sometimes really close partnership blurs that area. Maybe that's just me learning.

It was also common for social workers to receive regular updates from mentors:

SW2: Everything isn't confidential, there are very few things that are confidential within social work because a lot of the information needs to be noted to reduce risk and obviously if there's risk that the mentors will worry about, it's good practice to tell the client 'I'm a bit worried about that, I'm going to have to tell social work.' That can be uncomfortable with the mentors but I think it's important that they're open with them because good relationships are based on honesty. So that might be a barrier too then for the clients that don't want to disclose everything because they are worried that it will go back to social work maybe. It probably does cause some sort of barrier.

Mentors provided other examples of this close relationship with social work such as inviting social workers to review meetings with the aim of having 'everything out in the open' and keeping in constant communication with the social worker to ensure that the mentor and social worker heard the same information from women. Therefore, while mentoring is part of the statutory sector, this puts restrictions on the ability to have a truly confidential relationship which has been argued to be an important part of any mentoring relationship (Hucklesby and Wincup 2014).

Disengagement

Although it was common for women to miss scheduled appointments with mentors, a number of mentors stated that very few of the women they worked with had disengaged completely from the service and even if they did not engage for a few weeks they would normally meet with the mentor again after this break from contact. Other mentors and staff stated that disengagement was a problem and there were a number of possible reasons for this including: women were 'not ready'; women did not want help; homelessness; mental health; alcohol and drug misuse and relationships. Women who were viewed as not being ready for mentoring were those who were perceived to be heavily using drugs or alcohol and in unstable accommodation and therefore unlikely to keep mentoring appointments. Low mood was also viewed to be a reason for not engaging with a mentor. Relationships were also identified as being a substantial barrier to engagement, as noted by a manager:

Mngr1: We can start engaging with a woman and she's on her own and then six months down the line she meets someone and new issues occur, so for that reason again you would hope that you could continue to support and continue to build their self-esteem but their needs are such that we're not able to meet them. And they look for them elsewhere and that's not always the positive influence that you would want them to have.

One member of staff highlighted the problem of women disengaging after they had received sufficient practical support from Sacro and not continuing with the 'mentoring' part of the relationship:

Mngr4: Well to be perfectly honest, the ones that don't engage or disengage and then only come back in a crisis situation. I would say that is the most difficult one. Because they know that we will support them and we will help them but they disengage before you finally finish the plan with them.

According to mentors, women who have engaged with Sacro previously, know that they can rely on Sacro for the practical support they need when they leave prison even though they may not carry on seeing the mentor after they have received this support. It must be considered whether 'any engagement' with a mentor is seen as worthwhile as during this contact with the mentor they may be more likely to be attending appointments, some of which might be court mandated.

Although women currently engaging with the mentoring service could not ascertain other women's reasons for disengaging from mentoring, their own experiences of services may have given them an insight into probable reasons for disengagement by others. Women who used the service agreed that sometimes women were too 'chaotic.' For example, they might be heavily abusing drugs or alcohol and/or be experiencing an abusive relationship, and therefore unable to engage with a mentor. One woman recalled a time in her life when she would not have accepted the support:

Linda: Maybe some people if they're still really bad with...like see me in Motherwell, say I went through that court case and I got out it wouldnae have worked for me because bags [of heroin] would have come first. I

would be locking the door, no answering...so I won't say that in everybody's case, it's just my opinion.

Women also suggested that others might not engage in mentoring because they were worried about being 'let down', or concerned that information disclosed to the mentor may be reported to social work and result in negative consequences, such as increased monitoring of their relationship with their children or having their children removed from their care. Although disengagement generally did appear to be outwith the control of the mentor and dependent on the circumstances of the woman, some mentors revealed strategies that they adopted in an attempt to prevent disengagement. For example, mentors were persistent and would continue to attempt contact with the woman when she was not engaging by phoning and visiting her home and sending out letters. Mentors stated that they made it clear to women that the 'door was always open' for them to engage when they were ready. They felt that it was important not to push the women into doing something they were not yet comfortable doing, and to let them do things at their own pace:

M5: With some women, depending on their mental health state, you have to be very careful of that because it would just take one time to go in and say 'come on, you said we would go and do this' then everything that you've worked on for the last two/three months could be wiped out. Because it's like 'well you told me that I could do it when I'm ready, and you're pushing me.' They might disengage for weeks and weeks.

Disengagement has been highlighted in the literature as being a limitation to mentoring (Brown and Ross 2010a; Hucklesby and Wincup 2014; Ipsos MORI 2015; Mulholland et al. 2016). Brown and Ross (2010a) stated that the main reason for disengagement from the mentoring programme in their study was that the women did not make contact with their mentee after release from prison (after the mentoring relationship began in prison). This highlights the importance of 'gate pick up' by mentors on the day of the mentee's liberation. Brown and Ross (2010a) also state that women will not engage if they are 'not ready' to be mentored and this was a view generally shared by Sacro mentors and mentees. However, it cannot be assumed that engagement would always result in positive outcomes for women.

Exit from mentoring

The majority of mentors could not identify a length of time that a woman should be mentored for, stating that it varied depending on the needs of the woman. Of the women who used the service and participated in the interviews, the length of the relationship had varied from 1 month to 13 months with an average length of relationship of 7 months. With the exception of one woman (at her second interview), all of the women who were interviewed were still engaging with a mentor and had not exited the service. One woman had been in contact with her mentor for the past 10 months but she had also engaged with the same mentor for 8 months on a previous occasion and had re-referred herself when she needed support. Therefore, in total she had engaged with the same mentor for 18 months. Only two of the women indicated that their mentoring relationship was coming to an end soon.

The length of the relationship was quite flexible, however, this could depend on which location they were operating in. At the Fife service, for example, after the woman had completed her statutory order she was offered a further 8 weeks with the mentor, although there was room for flexibility. The majority view of mentors was that most women would need mentoring for between 6 and 12 months, and it was not uncommon for women to require support past the 12-month stage. Many of the women the mentors worked with had been in contact with the criminal justice system for many years, as one mentor explained:

M7: Some of the women I'm working with are in their 40s or 50s, some in their early 20s. It's taken a long time for them to get where they are when they're referred to us. It's taken a lot of years for them to be in such dire need and that's at the start so it really is a hard one Heather. I think because it's taken them so long to get where they are, six months is not going to magically change things around. It's not.

This suggests that mentoring may be more beneficial for women if they can engage on and off for a significant period of time. One mentor spoke about how the mentoring service she worked in had changed funding streams and this had affected what she could offer the women she worked with:

M6: So January last year to June when I was working with...the old women's mentoring I had to close women because they weren't applicable for the new criteria. A couple of them, it was difficult because...there wasn't really many services. Even though there are loads of services out there, I think a service that has not that strict criteria and who can work with somebody for you know lots of different reasons, whether that be supporting to other appointments is quite limited. So a couple of women they did find it difficult and they did say that to me that they didn't want to leave the service and they wish they were eligible. So I think it's difficult to close it when it's out of your control. Yeah that's a difficult one.

It is clear from this quote that Sacro was operating within the constraints of their funding. Again this is in line with the increasing problems of limited funding and competition between organisations for this funding. Closing the case described in the above quote, appeared to be outwith Sacro's control and as a result of funding constraints. This suggests that Sacro's close alignment with the government had resulted in them losing their 'voice.' Stacey (2012) argued that it is difficult for organisations to make the needs of their 'clients' the focus of their service when there is competition for funding, and the best value for money is being prioritised.

When the decision was made to end a mentoring relationship mentors stated that this was discussed in advance to prepare the woman for the reduction in support. The woman was sometimes allocated a volunteer mentor dependant on whether she wanted continued support and whether a volunteer mentor was available. When the woman was leaving the service, mentors would aim to have an exit review meeting with the woman. At this meeting the woman was advised that she should contact Sacro if she felt she needed support in the future.

There were occasions when women did not feel ready to end contact with their mentor. Generally, mentors were confident they had strategies in place that were successful at dealing with this problem should they arise. One of these strategies was to introduce the woman to a volunteer mentor and reduce her contact with the mentor. Another strategy was to emphasise to the woman that their relationship was professional. A mentor describes here how she managed a situation where she felt a woman was becoming 'dependent' on her:

M11: What I've done in the past when a service user has become completely dependent on me, is take a step back, and not responding to every single text and not responding to every single phone call and doing everything. Putting it back to them and saying 'what would you do in this situation?... so it's taking a step back and I reduced visits as well. I stopped driving them everywhere, acting like a taxi.

None of the women who used the service indicated that they were worried about ending the relationship with their mentor when the time came. One woman did have some concern however, about how the ending of the relationship would be communicated:

Christine: Just that I'm scared that when it's time to go apart she doesn't want to say the bye bye bit. That she would just drift away. I wouldn't like that to happen. Then again she might not like bye byes. I would like to change that about her if I think she's thinking that way. Just to get to say the goodbye before instead of her just drifting. Falling away.

Sometimes there were 'unplanned exits' where the woman would stop engaging with the mentor once her needs had been met and the relationship just came to a natural end. Key Performance Indicator data from 2013-2014 showed that there were only 8 exit needs assessments completed out of 29 closed cases suggesting that 21 of these cases were unplanned exits (see Table 5). There were instances where women disengaged and the mentor failed at attempts to make contact with the woman. If no contact was made after several attempts by the mentor, then she would withdraw. Mentors reported that on these occasions important outcomes had often still been achieved, even though the end of the relationship was earlier than planned.

The consideration of gender

As mentoring has been expanded in Scotland in response to the government recommendations that services should address the specific needs of women (Angiolini et al. 2012) it is important to explore whether gender was considered as a key component throughout mentoring. As discussed in Chapter 2, services that claim to be gender focused have become more common in the criminal justice system (Bloom and Covington 1998). Some Sacro staff members stated that they were

gender focused or working towards a 'gender-specific' service as discussed by a manager here:

Mngr5: I think Sacro has been on a learning curve that probably in the past programmes were designed and they weren't gender-specific and the good thing I think about Sacro is they do pay attention to outcomes. So if the outcomes weren't so good or weren't as expected they are at least trying to research into that, or try and learn or evaluate how could we have done that better. So I think we've got quite a strong learning and development environment...So I think over the years we have designed services that are around, we've become better acquainted with what are the needs of women, what kind of service can be put around the women that's going to get better outcomes. So I think we are quite gender focused.

When mentors who had worked with men in the past were asked whether they had a different approach to working with women, they all responded affirmatively, stating that they offered much more emotional support to women than men:

M2: Men don't like to show their emotions as much as women and they just need... accommodation, food in their belly, clothes on their back, money in their pocket and if there's an addiction then 'well just take me to the doctors'....They are very more practical, whereas with females [there is] much more deep thinking, much more i.e. support on the emotional side, the reengagement into the community, reengagement with family and friends, how they fit back into community life again.

In the present study when staff spoke about using a gender-specific approach it was normally associated with understanding the needs of women, but workers agreed that every case was different and they based their practice on the needs of the person they were working with, rather than viewing it as an approach that varied according to gender. None of the staff spoke about adopting a 'gender-specific' approach. References that were made to gender were most commonly about victimisation, relationships and emotionality of women they worked with. Staff also spoke about training being important in relation to the specific needs of women:

Mngr1: I source for the mentors Women's Aid domestic abuse training, self-harm training, sexual abuse training and personality disorder and mental health issues training. We would hope that our mentors would have a good basic knowledge of alcohol and drug misuse and wouldn't require training on that but it is out there...

M11: The one thing I would like to do is buy in modules to do with the women but I have spoken about it...because we did trauma informed training with Dr Stephanie Covington who's massive in America. She's got modules that we could buy. They're not cheap but you know, they're very beneficial to the women so I have spoken about that because when you're working with the women, once you're through crisis intervention, once they're stable you're sort of just going out and checking in, you're not really doing much active work.

Another aspect that was considered to be important to women, was the 'holistic' or 'multi-agency' approach to address the complex issues of many women. Social work staff who worked in different geographical areas spoke about how they now worked in teams that were dedicated 'women offender teams.' These teams focused on working closely with other agencies in both statutory and voluntary sector and some social work staff stated that they were more flexible in their approach to working with women than they might have been when working with clients in previous roles:

SW4: For our role we are more flexible probably more than a general CPO [community payback order] team. I mean really, if you follow the prescriptive line, it should be a caution for missing an appointment, a first warning, a warrant back to court but you have to see the bigger picture and as long as someone's making an effort to engage...Probably we're not as rigid on the breach as long as someone's seen them. We can use Sacro as our appointments as well so they might not have seen us that week but if they've seen Sacro or they've seen the nurse in our team, we can use that as they've been seen and be more flexible in our approach, because sometimes you breach someone, you're just either going to get them back on the order or they're going to get into custody and come out and the same thing.

SW5: I think the point is we're meant to be trying to be a bit more flexible, a bit more like, I'm not giving up on you, 'you're going to try and get away but I'm not going to let you.' So going out and visiting the house and trying to hunt them down and phoning places rather than just breaching them even though you know if you followed it to the letter we should probably be breaching people a bit earlier but we're trying not to. Trying to make sure we're doing out bit to try and get them back on board.

Therefore, factors that were viewed to be indicative of a 'gender-specific' or 'gender-focused' service at Sacro were: appropriate training; an understanding of the needs of women and a flexible, 'holistic' approach. This was not in line with the argument by Goodkind (2005) that gender informed services should provide opportunities for service users to influence social change through representing their communities or undertake critical thinking. However, it is likely that this was outwith the remit of Sacro and also social workers. As demonstrated in the quotes by social workers above, they were more flexible in regards to reporting when a woman had breached a statutory order, even though this was not in line with official guidelines about when a client should be breached. It is not always in the control of the worker whether they deliver a service that is gender sensitive because they may be asked to deliver services designed for men in a way that suits women, which is contradictory (Hannah-Moffat 2010). An example of this at Sacro is the requirement of mentors to complete paperwork on outcomes that they do not see as relevant to the women that they are working with, and a desire for more service user involvement:

M5: The duplication of duplication is just horrendous and I think that in order to rectify that I feel that the ground force workers should be consulted when paperwork is being made up. Because 9 times out of 10 it's kind of made up by people, I don't even know who they are but they're no working on the ground floor. So they say 'we need this and we need that' and it comes to us and we're like 'well that's just a duplication of that, that's no relevant to the work we do, that's a duplication of that, that and that.' So we go back and they say 'well it has to be done, have to do it' and it takes time away from working with the girls.

M2: I would really like to see mentees themselves have a bigger voice within the shaping of the service that is provided. There needs to be much more participation and the data that is collected, what kind of data is relevant to how we engage, how long we engage with...much more, bigger participation from them.

Although mentors viewed the outcomes on the paperwork as irrelevant for the women they are working with, this data will still be used as a reflection of the impact of mentoring and may have implications for outcomes that are prioritised in the future. The paperwork is similar to that of Sacro more generally and that completed for male and female service users. Therefore, in this light, it may not be viewed as an innovative 'gender-specific' approach.

Summary

There is a lack of clarity around the definition of mentoring. Mentors perceived mentoring to encompass any type of support that a woman needed. Although this understanding and practice of mentoring may be beneficial in its flexibility, it has potential problematic implications for policy and practice in that mentoring that encompasses 'everything' would be difficult to replicate. Some women who used the service highlighted the practical support they received while others spoke about their mentor being someone 'they could talk to.' This suggests that in some cases the mentor provided a befriending role, and in other instances that of a support worker. Previous literature has suggested that mentors provide a 'role model' for women, however women in the present study did not view their mentor as a role model but often as a friend. From the perspective of women, the relational aspect they valued in mentoring was an escape from social isolation and emotional support rather than an opportunity to model the behaviour of their mentor. The close relationship between Sacro and criminal justice social work also raised questions about the level of confidentiality in the mentoring relationship, another component that has been argued to be key in mentoring.

The importance of the word 'mentor' has increased due to the recommendations of the report of the Commission on Women Offenders, which may be related to the increasing marketisation of third sector services. Recent funding has been directed towards mentoring, and therefore in an environment where there is limited funding,

services are more likely to gain funding if they can offer a service that is favoured by funding bodies i.e. the Scottish Government in this case. This was also reflected in some of the training that mentors received. The most valuable training according to staff was that which helped them to address difficulties for women related to mental health and suicide, reflecting the serious issues of the women they worked with. In contrast, some of the training that was specific to mentoring was not viewed as relevant in their daily practice. It follows that this training and the claims of staff that they provided role modelling for women may be an example of staff 'acting as if' they are delivering mentoring similar to the 'imaginary penalties' literature by Carlen (2008).

Women's long-term goals for mentoring included regaining contact with their children, improving their accommodation situation and staying drug free. These were identified by women as long-term goals. Goal setting within a set time frame, which has been argued to be part of mentoring by some academics, and what makes it distinct from befriending, was not a key component of mentoring in this study. Although goals were sometimes written down on an action plan, this was often an informal process and structured action planning was rarely adhered to. This was due to the context of women's lives in which women could find themselves facing difficulties which hindered prescription to a structured action plan. This also raises questions about how services for women should be evaluated, when setting goals within timeframes is often not possible. When mentors discussed the needs of women in the previous chapter they expressed empathy relating to the structural disadvantage of the women but when discussing the processes and goals of mentoring, the notion of skills development and a focus on the individual was introduced. This also included goals to 'empower' and 'responsibilise' women. Mentors and staff stated that the development of skills was associated with positive outcomes and removal from poverty which is in line with an individualistic approach. Skills development did not seem to be key to the mentoring relationship in practice, however, again in line with the research by Carlen (2008), staff acted as if they were developing skills in women that were required to reduce offending. In practice, they were responding to immediate needs such as transport, emotional support and making phone calls. These are issues that reflected problems outwith the criminal justice system.

The importance of the ability of mentors to provide practical support and respond to crisis situations was shown to be vital, and just as important as emotional support. Practical support often related to meeting the basic needs of the women and their circumstances, rather than looking specifically at offending. Relational aspects of mentoring were highlighted in the accounts of mentors and women. For example, it was important to women that their mentors showed a caring, friendly and non-judgemental attitude, and provided an informal environment that allowed the woman to voice her own views and feelings. This relational aspect was viewed to be more important than structured action plans and goal setting. Volunteer mentors were not a major component of this mentoring model. They were occasionally introduced and provided social support towards the end of a relationship and a befriending role with some practical support when appropriate. This reiterates that some of the components which have been assumed to be part of mentoring in previous literature, were not the most valued aspects of mentoring in this study. The types of activities which the mentors undertook with women such as accessing benefit payments, visiting foodbanks and attending housing meetings with women emphasises the lack of support that is available for the women. It highlights the problems with the welfare system, rather than deficits in the attitudes and behaviours of women.

Social capital did not appear to be central to the mentoring process, however there were aspects of mentoring which reflected the understanding of social capital but forward by Brown and Ross (2010a). The direct relationship with the mentor and resulting emotional support which was highly valued by the women can be viewed as a social capital in that it reduced social isolation. The advocacy role which was described by Brown and Ross (2010a) as a route to activate social capital, and is similar to bridging social capital was evident in the current study when mentors described speaking on behalf of women at meetings but this type of support was limited. Access to new relationships outside of the mentoring relationship appeared to be limited to criminal justice networks through group work programmes. There was no evidence of mentors providing employment 'contacts' for women and providing a route to bridging social capital via this route. Activities rarely involved completing job applications, or preparing for employment interviews largely because women were not at this stage. It follows that when employment is viewed as a key gain of social capital, it is not always relevant to women in the criminal justice system.

The amount of time that women were mentored for varied, but it rarely lasted longer than 12 months. In line with other studies of mentoring, there were high numbers of women who missed scheduled appointments with their mentor and some women would disengage completely from the service before mentors felt that they were ready to exit the service. Mentors identified a number of reasons for this, many associated with the circumstances of the women including: homelessness; mental health; abusive/controlling relationships and problematic alcohol and drug use. Mentors also felt that sometimes women did not want help or were 'not ready' for mentoring. As the study did not involve interviews with women who had disengaged with the service 'early' then it is difficult to ascertain the reasons behind disengagement. Those women who were interviewed suggested reasons similar to mentors, that these women's lives were 'too chaotic' or they were just 'not ready' to see a mentor.

There was a consideration of whether gender was implemented in practice. Again there was a lack of clarity when discussing the incorporation of gender into the model. According to staff, mentoring appeared to be gender sensitive insofar as this related to understanding the needs of women, but there appeared to be a lack of a transformative component that challenged the inequalities of women that have contributed to their criminalisation, which likely reflected the remit of the mentoring service and the limitations of its connection with the criminal justice system. The next chapter will consider the impact of the mentoring process on the experiences of the women who used the service.

Chapter 7 - Impact of mentoring

Having considered the issues that women faced and the process of mentoring, this chapter will explore whether mentoring was able to address the issues of women through the activities undertaken. Mentoring is almost always part of a number of services that a woman is engaging with and there are difficulties with isolating mentoring from these services in order to measure its impact. However, the qualitative approach in this study provided some insight into the impact of mentoring on women's lives through the accounts of women who used the service. In addition, accounts from mentors and staff were also explored. The theoretical basis of mentoring was also considered throughout the chapter. The impact of the service on mentors is then described. There is a discussion on the potential of peer mentoring as a development opportunity for women, followed by an exploration of the measurement of outcomes within Sacro. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion on the key issue of funding and sustainability for the mentoring service.

Engagement with other agencies

When discussing the impact that mentoring had on their lives, women highlighted the benefits they gained through agencies they had accessed via their mentors. Mentoring facilitated this impact either through providing information about services available, transport to appointments, referral to agencies and emotional support at appointments:

Fiona: She got me involved with Businesses Glasgow¹⁹. It's something in the east end, up at Parkhead. She's put me in touch with them. So they help me. I can go in there any time and use their computer and they'll help me.

Linda: Before [my mentor] came along I just felt helpless. Going to the job centre, I could never have done that myself. I have never had help like that in my life. Never. My doctor, came to my doctors, spoke for me. Citizens Advice as well, done the letters for me, copied the letters out. So that was great having somebody.

¹⁹ 'Jobs and Businesses' in Glasgow is an organisation that provides training and resources to residents of Glasgow with the aim improving employment prospects.

Employment agencies, healthcare and counselling services were the most common types of agencies that were accessed by women with the support of their mentor. These were agencies that supported women to cope with difficulties they faced in their everyday life. The majority of women did not have friends or family who could provide them with this type of support. Mentors and social work staff also viewed engagement with other agencies as a key outcome in the mentoring process. Some mentors commented that engagement with agencies impacted on the self-esteem and confidence of the women they worked with:

Mngr1: We get women who at initial assessment haven't been to a dentist in 5 years. They have very poor oral hygiene and they're very self-conscious about it. If we can link that woman into a dentist and work happens on their teeth then, all that self-consciousness around that small thing is alleviated.

SW7: Dealing with housing issues before it becomes a homelessness issue so an increase in skill and capacity and confidence around dealing with agencies...So it might be confidence building to the point of taking up a volunteer opportunity or a course, even if it's a link in to a women's service or to addiction services.

Engagement with agencies was also viewed as an important outcome that would have long-term impact on women's 'capacity' to deal with agencies, which is in line with an individualistic approach, as discussed in Chapter 2. However, as the present study does not look at the long-term impact of mentoring, it cannot be claimed whether this 'capacity' was an outcome of mentoring for women.

Confidence, self-esteem and empowerment

Confidence and self-esteem were introduced as goals of mentoring in the previous chapter by mentors and other staff. Women spoke about how mentoring had helped to increase confidence in relation to their basic needs being met and accessing new services. They related their confidence to being praised and encouraged by their mentor and to changes in their lives, such as benefits being accessed, budget plans being delivered and reduced social isolation:

Alana: Also she got me into Venture Trust²⁰ and I went away for 5 days with Venture Trust. Like team building, and I got a certificate, cave climbing, abseiling, cooking.... it was good. My confidence was a little bit low then. So it helped with my confidence and I got a certificate at the end of it, so it was really good yeah...Oh yeah, if I do something she'll say 'you've done great.' I was going to restoration [recovery support group] and going to one stop shop [for women only] and doing all these different things and she said 'aw you've got a busy life for yourself' so aye yeah just giving that support and praising you up when you do good. It gives you a little bit more confidence.

Debbie: But my confidence has improved and that's down to myself, that's down to the organisation and that's down to [my mentor], that's just down to working towards everything and putting everything right again...[my mentor] probably praises me more than what I actually praise myself. She has actually said to me and others in the organisation, you don't give yourself enough credit.

Alana's quote suggests that keeping busy contributed to increased confidence. It is important that confidence can be sustained even after the mentoring support has ended, and that the woman will be in an environment where she will have the choices and opportunities to gain confidence and skills (Clarke 2004).

It was commonly expressed by women that they appreciated not being dictated to by their mentors, and this may be related to improved self-efficacy which has been associated with desistance (McIvor et al. 2009). This was particularly important for one woman who had learning difficulties. Someone taking the time to teach her how to do certain tasks such as completing forms, (rather than doing tasks for her) led to increased self-efficacy:

Christine: That's why my mentor tends to get me motivated and explains things to me [...] To get me interested, because if someone is doing

²⁰ Venture Trust is a third sector organisation that offers outdoor personal development courses for people who are experiencing difficulties in their lives, with the aim of improving motivation, skills and confidence.

something for me all the time then I don't bother wanting to know because it's getting done for me so my mentor teaches me as well as doing stuff for me [...] She helps me cope a lot lot better than I did years ago.

Confidence and self-esteem were also viewed to be significant outcomes by mentors. A mentor here suggests that staying out of prison is due to the skills and confidence of the woman rather than circumstances:

M4: Yeah sometimes we maybe keep girls out of prison for six months and then the 7th month they get a remand or whatever but you've kept them out of prison for six months and you've given them the confidence and skills so that when they come back out after their 7th month, then 'right ok, maybe next time it'll be ten months or a year.'

The majority of social work staff also stated that confidence and self-esteem were key outcomes of mentoring. This increase in confidence was related to basic needs being met, as described by a senior social worker here:

SW3: Confidence definitely. I mean they'll go and get the women and take them to the one stop shop and stuff, basic needs, getting them registered with GPs, dentists, making sure they get to court, support them with employment needs, college. We've had Sacro mentors getting women into volunteering. Getting them an addictions worker, engaging with mental health services. So it ticks all their needs eh.

In the context of key issues facing women (including addiction, mental health problems, homelessness and poverty), confidence and self-esteem would not appear to be the most urgent issues. However, they are viewed as key outcomes of mentoring and therefore as key components related to offending, while reducing reoffending is an aim of mentoring. Confidence and self-esteem were often viewed by mentors to go hand in hand and they are also related to the concept of empowerment. The previous chapter identified 'empowerment' as a goal of mentoring according to mentors and staff. This is a difficult concept to measure and define. Haney (2010) states that empowerment cannot be realised in environments where women do not have freedom. Although the women in the present study were not imprisoned, many

were subject to statutory orders which restricted their freedom. Also, although the women in the present study did experience positive outcomes such as accessing their benefits, attending health related appointments and feeling more confident, it cannot be claimed that the women were 'empowered' because their freedom was still restricted by their marginalisation. For example, many women continued to live in poverty which was a limitation on their freedom and empowerment as noted by Gemma, who was coming towards the end of mentoring and viewed as a 'success story':

Gemma: The days consist of trailing around looking for the shops which are inexpensive, balancing heating and food costs. A balance between bus fares to these shops and appointments. If you are on your own you can only rely on yourself unless you have good friends. I find it exhausting at times to be honest, trailing shopping and soul destroying standing at bus stop and absolutely frozen 'blown to bits', having been fed up in the first place.

In the context of Sacro's mentoring service there was little evidence of the type of empowerment which attempted to influence social circumstances of the women's lives (Young 1994; Pollack 2005) which is likely reflective of the priorities and remit of the service. Service user involvement was a policy in place at Sacro and staff provided some examples, such as service user Feedback Forms and invitations to speak at meetings but this was only a small component of the service.

Improvements in the areas of empowerment, confidence and self-esteem must be considered in the context of the criminal justice system and the constraints this may have on making these gains. For example, the stigma associated with having a criminal record will have an impact on confidence (McDermott 2012). In addition, the criminal justice system and particularly prisons are focused on control, security and risk management. Any intervention that is in this context is necessarily concerned with these factors. For example, Pollack (2007) gives the example of a participant in her research study focused on the probation experiences of women, who attended a self-esteem course in prison because she felt bad about herself after being strip searched within the prison. This highlights the contradictory nature of the goal of the prison service in the context of the group work programme (to increase self-esteem) and the prison environment itself, which makes the goal unrealistic. This raises questions

about the likelihood of achieving goals such as confidence, empowerment and increases in self-esteem in an environment that contributes to impacting negatively on all of these. This is a challenge for a mentoring service that is attempting to resolve issues related to poverty and also the impact of imprisonment.

Mental health and emotional wellbeing

Some women identified mentoring support as contributing to their emotional wellbeing²¹ indirectly, through referral to counselling services, or directly through a positive relationship with their mentor:

Rachel: [My mentor] comes out for a chat every now and again. If I feel down she can talk me through it. She referred me to counselling which I felt really grateful for because I could get it out because of not knowing the person and that really helped.

Christine: Aye she's took me before to my psychiatrist. So she's actually took me there and went with me. For my first time, I find that hard but she takes me there by her car and she ... it's like putting your hand out and somebody grabbing it.

Women who had been diagnosed with mental health problems such as bi-polar disorder were medicated for their condition. Therefore, the contribution of the mentors to positive emotional wellbeing and mental health outcomes is part of a wider package of support. The mental health problems of women cannot be viewed in isolation from their social inequalities. Unequal access to resources including money, social support networks and the stigma of having a criminal record will have an impact on mental health (Williams et al. 2001). Generally, mentors did not question the suitability of mentoring for women with mental health problems and believed that mental health could be impacted positively through working on related issues:

²¹ Emotional wellbeing was selected as an appropriate term to use to describe self-reported experiences of depression and anxiety. Not all of the women had been diagnosed with mental illness and some rejected the notion that depression and anxiety were mental illnesses. Additionally, the researcher is not in a position to clinically diagnose mental health concerns.

M6: If they've not got any good social relationships then they can become really isolated and that can lead into poor mental health and potentially drug use.

M8: You should see them moving down the scale in all areas - housing, practical, mental health and physical health. Just whatever services you're tying them in with. Like if they're depressed or whatever, through all the issues being in place. Lifts their depression naturally but then they might get hooked into Wise Women²² or wee classes to promote their self-esteem. So as long as you're doing everything for each issue, through time you will see a difference.

Within a criminal justice context, behaviour that may have been judged to be a symptom of poor mental health is then judged as 'deviant' (Pate 2013). This perception has implications for the type of support that will be available, as reflected on by a Sacro manager:

Mngr4: The only other difficulty we've got and it's a big difficulty with mental health issues locally, is basically they won't do the...medics won't do assessments for our women if they have mental health issues and are still using [drugs], whether they have alcohol issues or drug issues and that's a big problem because we have service users who may come along and they've identified mental health issues. They've maybe planned suicide attempts, you take them along to the medics, mental health and because they maybe used a bag of heroin that day they won't do a mental health assessment. So this is a huge difficulty we have got. This is a huge difficulty within our service because we do have a lot of women that are coming out and they do have mental health issues but also they do have an addiction as well, so it's how you overcome that and it's difficult for us to be able to help and put a lot of support in place when you're faced with difficulties like that.

²² Wise Women delivers confidence building classes for women who have been victims of violence and crime.

There should be consideration about what mentors can realistically achieve with the women they engage with when there may be serious mental health problems (possibly undiagnosed). It can be argued that it is the role of the mentor to refer the woman onto someone who is qualified to work in the area of mental health. However, this potentially puts an unfair responsibility on the mentor to make an assessment in the first instance as to whether there is some cause for concern in regards to the mental health of the woman she is working with.

Relationships

Relationships have been found to be a key issue for women in the criminal justice system, as discussed in Chapter 6, with many women having experienced abusive relationships throughout their lives. The women in the present study valued the relationship they had with their mentor and this relationship might be regarded as a positive outcome during the time of the mentoring relationship:

Louise: From the first time I met her, I was dead shy but I can open up to her a lot now. I've got a relationship with her so it does really help me a lot [...] I can kind of sit and speak to her about any of my problems that I've got. So I built that relationship up with her and she's always been there for me so I can trust her.

Brown and Ross (2010a) and Keating (2012) have argued that mentoring allows women to practice and experience positive relationships. This suggests that having a 'positive' relationship is a skill that can be developed through practice and puts the responsibility for any future negative relationships on women. It does not take into account that some women will have to rely on relationships for resources. In the present study although many women were socially isolated and some stated that they had never had this kind of 'support' from anyone before their accounts did not highlight that they had 'learned' how to be in a positive relationship. Brown and Ross (2010a) also argued that women will seek the approval of their mentor if they have a positive relationship and 'aim to demonstrate the same values shown by their mentor.' There was some evidence of this in the present study as shown by two women here:

Katie: I don't think a lot of people would reoffend [if they had a mentor] because now I would dread for Irene to come to that door and me tell her

I've done something wrong [...] If she came and I said 'I went out last night and took drugs, I'm in trouble. I got caught by the police' just something like that, I would feel as if I'd let her down.

Fiona: I'm still taking benzos (valium) now and again and [my mentor] had never seen me on them. She walked into my house and said 'Oh my god' and her face just dropped. I'd taken them the day before. The amount I take, I take like 30 or 40 at a time and so it's the next day you see it. She said 'how many have you taken?' I wouldn't lie to her. She said she had to leave and couldn't stay [...] I was mortified that day. Like she was scared I was going to do something, I really was mortified about that.

However, one of these participants disengaged with mentoring shortly after the interview. Fiona clearly felt shame and felt that she was viewed as dangerous due to her drug use. This suggests that although women may seek the approval of their mentor, due to the differences in their lives it is not always possible to 'demonstrate the same values' and a positive relationship in itself is not enough to achieve this. The relationship alone was not sufficient to change their circumstances significantly. Therefore, although mentoring may touch on relational theory it cannot account for the process fully.

New relationships or connections outside of the mentoring context, for example, with family were not viewed to be influenced significantly by mentoring. As discussed in Chapter 6, many mentors felt that it was inappropriate to comment on the relationships that the woman had with others. They did, however, listen to women speak about their relationships with family and partners and sometimes offered advice:

Christine: My mentor helps me to understand my mum because ...my mentor explains where my ma is coming from and then she explains where I'm coming from and then she says. 'Now can you see the difference? Why your mum's feeling that way? Why you've reacted that way?' She helps me understand a lot.

Fiona: I was still letting my ex-partner come up and down to my house, shower, he wasn't putting electricity in so I was letting him shower, change, wash his clothes. I was still doing everything for him [my mentor] said 'You need to stop this. He's using you.' Everyone was telling me to stop. So she helped me with that kind of thing.

These quotes demonstrate the impact that the mentor had as a confidant. Other women stated that relationships were not a relevant area for focus with their mentor as they were not looking to form new relationships. In some instances, mentoring helped women to access new networks and form new relationships through facilitating access to group work sessions. Seven of the women interviewed had recently attended group work sessions either organised by Sacro or the local authority and they valued the support of the other women who attended the groups:

Rachel: It's just silly things like bingo etc. but it's good to meet other people that's been in the same situation as yourself and not got much and just trying to make do with what they've got. We're all in the same boat.

The women enjoyed attending these groups and the opportunities they provided for meeting new people. These types of relationships represented bonding social capital as they are links between women with similar experiences. It may have been the case that the women involved would have attended these types of group work sessions even without the support of a mentor, as a referral from a mentor was not a requirement for attending the group. Criminal justice social work staff, for example, also encouraged women to attend groups. Some mentors tried to connect women with social groups outside the context of the criminal justice system.

M10: You need to be aware of what type of people are going to services because you don't want them mixing with the wrong type of people but like the girl I was speaking about, she's going to cooking classes, drama classes and things like that. Things that are provided around the town and she absolutely loves it. She's made friends and she's met a partner and it's just making sure that they're linked in with the appropriate agencies and services about.

There was little evidence of mentoring having a major impact on relationships that women had prior to engaging with a mentor, for example with family, friends or partners. Mentoring was much more focused on the individual and not on the women's relationships with others. In the study by Farrall (2004), reviewed in Chapter 3, probation workers would on occasion contact family members of the client and request support, and this was described as activating social capital. This was not part of the mentoring role in the present study. Mentors hoped that improvements in confidence and self-esteem would 'empower' a woman to end negative relationships. Many of the mentors held the view that working towards addressing basic needs would build on the confidence of the women they mentored, which would then lead to positive relationships:

M5: Getting them stabilised on whatever their prescription might be and trying to enable them and empower them to make better choices and better relationships and improve their social skills so that they're better equipped to lead a non-offending existence.

This view represents the individualised approach in working towards positive relationships as an outcome for women, and suggests that involvement in 'better relationships' depends on the ability of the woman to make correct choices. It was noted by some mentors that relationships were used to measure risk. Risk assessments were sometimes used by mentors to demonstrate 'progress' of women they worked with:

M11: Even your risk assessments as well, because if you look back from your very first risk assessments to your final review in your risk assessment, you know how that risk has changed.

Here a mentor describes how a woman is being assessed as high risk because she has a violent partner back in her life:

M4: I've got a few girls that are risk assessed only from the office just now. A couple of them have got partners back in their life that are violent, some of them are heavily drug using, alcohol dependent just now so it's not safe for me to go out so we do update risk assessments whenever something

comes up, we risk assess it. I write down what's happened. It goes to [my manager] and she'll assess the risk and whether it's changed and if it's changed it normally means that we go off home and community visits and it's just all from the office.

This account suggests that a woman's level of risk was sometimes determined at times by whether she was in an abusive relationship. This type of focus on risk and risk reduction as a positive outcome, can lead to a woman being blamed for her victimisation, as her involvement in abusive relationships is being viewed as an individual outcome. Women in the present study would also be classed as high risk if they lived in a community that had high levels of disadvantage:

M4: Some of the girls are risk assessed that you can't do home visits so it's just community ones. That could be that there's a partner staying there or something. Other flats, well not many flats but there's a couple of areas which are just too dodgy as a female worker that we just don't go to - so maybe that will be community visits. Things like that we would just go to a cafe or something like that.

Hannah-Moffat (2010) highlights the inadequacy of gender-responsive models that assess women as being high risk due to their relationships and how it is inappropriate to measure women based on their ability to adhere to the normative standard of middle class women. If a woman is involved in an 'ideal' standard of relationship, then her risk assessment will place her at lower risk than if she was in an abusive relationship.

Drug and alcohol use

Four women reported that their drug or alcohol use had reduced recently and in some cases this was partly due to having the emotional support of their mentor, but mentoring alone could not impact on drug and alcohol use. For the women who had previous or current issues with drug or alcohol, generally they did not view mentoring as having a direct effect on their addiction as they often had a separate drugs worker. Although, mentors did provide emotional support that sometimes prevented women from coping with boredom or emotional pain through the use of drugs or alcohol. Women who were using drugs or alcohol heavily were unlikely to engage with their

mentor, and mentors were not permitted to work with women under the influence of these substances.

The majority of women stated that drugs/alcohol was not an area of focus in meetings with their mentor and that it was not currently an issue for them. Mentors stated that women were much less likely to engage with a mentor when they were using drugs and alcohol. It is therefore not surprising that those who were currently engaging and were in a position that they turned up for an interview, were not currently using drugs or alcohol heavily, or in a way that was affecting their lives to the extent that they did not turn up for appointments. This is in line with Brown and Ross (2010a) who stated that those women who had less severe drug or alcohol problems were more likely to engage with mentors.

Accommodation

The majority of women who were interviewed were already in accommodation, although sometimes mentors did attend housing appointments with women. As the majority of women interviewed were in the community at the time of the mentoring relationship and not in custody, accommodation was not a key issue compared to women who have recently left prison. Indeed, for the women who had met their mentor first within prison, the mentor had helped to arrange accommodation for when they left prison, and met them at the gate to transport them to accommodation on the day.

Baldry (2010) argues that women require a safe space away from negative relationships and supported accommodation can be the beginning of such a safe space. Interviews with mentors and the homes matrix data that was available suggested that housing was a priority for many of the women that they worked with. All of the women who used the service, that were interviewed, were in accommodation that they viewed as generally satisfactory but this was in comparison to prison or homelessness at times. Some of the women did talk about the negative aspects of their accommodation. Mentors and staff also spoke about the 'success' of being able to secure women accommodation, even when this accommodation was only a bed and breakfast. There was clearly not a 'safe space' available for many of the women in mentoring. Baldry also highlights the inappropriateness of 'criteria' that women must meet to access post-release support.

As noted in Chapter 6, there is a scarcity of quality accommodation in Scotland. A recent report by Shelter Scotland (2016) has also noted that the standard of temporary accommodation, particularly bed and breakfast hotel and hostel accommodation is low, often without the provision of basic amenities. Shelter Scotland recommends that this type of temporary accommodation should be avoided when placing vulnerable individuals.

Reducing reoffending

Reducing reoffending has been stated to be one of the goals of mentoring (Angiolini et al. 2012; Mulholland et al. 2016). When women were asked whether and how mentoring had supported them to reduce their reoffending, there were mixed responses, with some women stating that mentoring did help them not to reoffend and others stated that reoffending was not an issue and that they needed support to deal with other issues:

Diane: There would never be a chance of me reoffending anyway. Never, never, never. I don't need support for anything like that. We identified that right away. I needed financial support and emotional support... Relationships yes. Training and employment is further down the line for me. So everything apart from reoffending.

Diane then goes on to explain that she does not need the support of a mentor to stop reoffending, but to deal with problems that are related to her offence. She acknowledges that this 'criminalisation' can happen to anyone for reasons outwith their own control:

It makes me think and opens up my mind to this kind of service because I need it now. I think about other people in the past who have used it and someone else who is like me. That a bad thing happened to a pretty decent person. So it makes me think about it from that perspective. There could be lots of 'me's' out there. Something really terrible happened and they're finding it difficult to cope with the fact that that did happen to them not for the worry that they're going to do it again.

Another woman reflected that her mentor did have a key role to play in her offending behaviour:

Claire: If I didn't have Sacro and [my mentor] when I first got out I think I might have done something daft to get myself recalled, to get myself back to prison because things were so chaotic and hectic when I first got out. I think I'd have done something daft like running into a shop and shop lifting something just to get the security guard to see me, to dial 999. Get the police to get me recalled. I think I would have done something stupid like that.

In the above quotation, prison was viewed as safe compared to circumstances on the outside of prison. Mentors generally viewed mentoring as contributing to a reduction in reoffending in the long-term. Although they had stated that reducing reoffending was a goal of mentoring, in practice they took modest outcomes as evidence of long-term change. These included: a woman who had not previously engaged with services engaging consistently with a mentor; a woman making phone calls on her own and a woman using public transport. An example is given by a mentor:

M5: It might sound like a wee thing to you but she doesn't litter anymore because I've picked her up on littering a few times and flinging paper and although it seems like a small thing that was a lifetime habit that she had.

These modest outcomes give an indication of the aim of mentoring at the operational level. They also raise questions about how success of mentoring is measured and how this is reported in outcomes for funders. The common view among both mentor and social work staff was that any reduction in reoffending should be seen as positive. Mentors generally stated that even a minimal reduction in reoffending should be taken as a positive outcome, for example:

M6: I think for me now, working in this kind of area and having the realisation that actually reducing reoffending doesn't mean that someone stops offending altogether. Positive reducing reoffending can simply mean somebody who is in and out of being remanded, then being released, then being remanded constantly, if actually they are out in the community for a

month whereas before they'd be in and out every 2 weeks, it's positive reducing reoffending isn't it?

Mentors also generally held the view that positive outcomes were likely to be evident further on in women's lives, after they had stopped being mentored as a result of skills developed during mentoring. This is described by a volunteer mentor:

VM3: she was really doing well, she'd been involved with a man and they had parted and she was getting back on her feet. She had her benefits all sorted out, she had settled into the hostel, she had been buying herself some new boots and some clothes...She was doing really well and he came back into her life and she had phoned up Sacro and said 'I don't want to be seen anymore. So and so has told me that I don't need Sacro. We'll be good for one another...' and I heard from [my colleague] later that she actually went quite downhill, a few steps back and started using drugs again, fell pregnant you know so there can be a lot of factors of why they don't come forward [...]. But I believe Heather that we sow seeds and I think that what she learned during that time that was good will have come back. That she'll want that back again so it's about sowing seeds and they might not work at the time but people actually take things in and it might be a year, 2 years down the line, six months down the line, whatever and they say 'wait a minute, I remember discussing this and I've got an idea what to do here.'

This quote represents the common view of mentors that unplanned disengagement did not necessarily mean that lasting change had not been implemented in the lives of the women that they mentored. Mentors viewed these short-term outcomes (even if they were not sustained) to be evidence of contributing to the long-term goal of reducing reoffending. This was despite mentors not seeing evidence of this because they were not in contact with the woman after she left the mentoring service. Workers in the drug and alcohol treatment sector have also noted the importance of recognising that they will not always see the benefits of their work at the time of their support. As recovery is viewed as a 'journey', staff are aware that relapse is common and should be expected (VanBremen and Chasnoff 1994).

The finding that mentors focused on modest achievable outcomes rather than the overall objectives of the service such as reducing reoffending is supported by research undertaken by Carlen (2008) where she discusses 'imaginary penalties', as previously discussed. Instead of attempting to meet objectives that they could not realistically achieve, staff worked towards informal objectives such as measuring prisoner satisfaction and examining the processes involved in the programmes. The perception from mentors that outcomes such as 'not littering' were evidence of long-term change can be taken as mentors 'acting as if' they are meeting the objective of reducing reoffending in the long-term (Carlen 2008). The importance of 'modest' outcomes described in the present study may be viewed as similar to the informal objectives described by Carlen (2008). The following quote by a mentor provides an example of the types of outcomes that mentors were working towards with women. They were not recorded anywhere but taken as evidence (informally) of the service working. Similar to the staff in Carlen's study they are working towards informal objectives that they know are achievable:

M1: Making phone calls. It sounds silly but a lot of the girls I work with they don't like or didn't like doing things like that so I would do it for them and then gradually try to encourage them to do it themselves. They'll come on the phone, or they'll take my phone to jobseekers or whatever they need to phone about. So little changes like that, you gradually see yourself and think well that's really good.

While many mentors and Sacro staff stated that the goal of mentoring was 'reintegration', and to support women to live an 'offence free life', it was also the common view of respondents that achievable outcomes were more modest. Keeping a woman out of prison for a significant period of time and helping a woman to engage with services were judged to be achievable outcomes by mentors. However, some mentors stated that they did not expect a woman to be able to distance herself from her current acquaintances or gain educational qualifications. Softer outcomes that were viewed as difficult to measure were judged as being equally important as reoffending:

SW2: It should be about looking about where the women were at the beginning and where they are at the end with regards to all aspects of their

life, not just their offending. So whether they've got addictions under control, whether they are managing childcare better or whether their mental health has improved, or whether they are in work or a college placement. How happy the women are feeling because all the women on my caseload aren't particularly happy.

The following social worker stated that the aim of mentoring was to help a woman to live an 'offence free life,' but when asked how successful she felt mentoring was in reducing reoffending, the response was quite cautious and emphasised the importance again of modest achievable outcomes:

SW1: Em...I think we have seen success stories so...sc change, any positive change I think has to be viewed as that, as positively, because you can have woman who have lived a life of chaos so it isn't going to change overnight. But you know we do look, our outcomes, our logic model does look at small changes and that's always seen as positive. If you get somebody who for years, or historically has never engaged and they actually will start to go to places and do things then that's really positive.

The following quote from another social work staff member supports the view that the goal of a reduction in reoffending can be difficult in the long-term:

SW8: You hope that with the added things that we're now putting into place [...] they're getting a level of support there and then moving onto me and moving into the community and the supports that we put in place along with mentoring and Sacro. But it's the same scenario, just to the points that I've already made, it's whether the person wants to change so that's number one. All the supports in the world aren't going to help [...] if that person doesn't want to change and as I say some of the drawbacks are things like housing where you've lost them.

This quote appears to be contradictory because on the one hand the social work respondent views a motivation to change as the most important factor in reducing reoffending, but then goes on to say that the quality of accommodation, that is circumstances, will be a determining factor in whether the woman will meet the goal of

reduced reoffending. This is consistent with research of Corcoran and Fox (2013). They found that workers were empathetic and understood the welfare needs of the women they worked with but on the other hand subscribed to neo-liberal views when they attributed personal responsibility of women to the circumstances of the women. This suggests that although services for women, including mentoring in the present study are presented as 'innovative' and specifically designed for women, the underlying assumptions continue to represent an ideology that is based on an individualised framework and contains strategies of responsabilisation.

Employment, education and financial situation

Entry into employment and education were not common outcomes experienced by women, although they have been argued to be important for desistance and one of the key routes for accessing different social networks and accessing social capital (Dominguez and Watkins 2003; Farrall 2004). The importance of employment for women who offend compared to men, may be due to women being more likely to be primary caregivers and the higher level of mental health problems which both present significant barriers to employment. This is in line with findings of recent evaluations of UK based services for women who offend, that found that employment was only an outcome for a small number of women who attended the services (Easton and Matthews 2010; Radcliffe and Hunter 2013; Dryden and Souness 2015; Ipsos MORI 2015). In the present study, there were various barriers that prevented women from considering employment or training in the immediate future. Most commonly this was due to health issues, however one woman reported how fear for her own safety prevented her from attending her desired college course:

Alana: There was a college course I was going to be doing for 18 weeks but because of the area it was in and I'd been assaulted in that area, I couldn't go to it [...] I couldn't go because I'd been assaulted by 3 girls and a boy so I wasn't prepared to put myself in an area where I could bump into them so I would say yeah they did try and help me in that sense but it wasn't their fault and it wasn't my fault that I couldn't go.

In this case, Alana had a rational fear of attending the college course and she recognises that she nor her mentor can be blamed for these circumstances. This highlights the limitations of an individualised approach as Alana was clearly motivated

to enrol on a college course but due to circumstances outwith her control she is prevented from working towards her goals. This demonstrates that motivation and intensive one-to-one support are not always sufficient to facilitate change in the lives of women experiencing multiple levels of disadvantage. While confidence and self-esteem are important outcomes for women, if they are still unable to access opportunities to change their circumstances then it is unlikely this confidence will be sustained.

Many of the women in the current study were unable to work due to health reasons and were receiving Disability Living Allowance²³. One woman was in paid employment, and another was volunteering at a charity shop. The woman in paid employment had worked before she met her Sacro mentor and so it cannot be taken as an outcome of mentoring. The woman who was volunteering at the charity shop had a dissimilar background to many of the other women in the study, as she had extensive work experience before being imprisoned. Two of the women were currently seeking work but again there were challenges as described by a woman here:

Fiona: I need to go and try and get a wee job, in the bookies or something, anything at all. I will, I'll take anything the now just to get out and about and meet people. Because I keep saying 'how you meant to meet pals?' That's how you meet pals, out working. [...] Time to get to get work because I'm fit and I think the depressions is more with sitting about [...] So I'm going to go round and try and pass all my CVs around to Argos and all these people. They're always looking for people. I thought maybe if I'm good at it, they'll keep me on. The jobs that the job centre keeps giving to me are 20 hours and that's no good for me. If I do 20hrs....I only get 120 a fortnight just now and what happens if I do 20 hours, nothing changes but I need to pay my own housing. I can't pay that off of that money. If I do 36 hours or more I get £50 per week tax credits so that would pay rent and council tax and then my wages would kind of be my own so it's weird the way it's worked out isn't it. They're working it out as though you say 'well what's the point in working?' I'm working there for nothing really. Not even nothing, it's going to cost me to get in and out the town with bus fares.

²³ Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is a benefit that assists with the extra costs that disabled people face as a result of their disabilities (this has recently been replaced by Personal Independent Payment).

Fiona is motivated to work, not only for financial reasons as she realises the financial gains will not be substantial. Instead her motivation to work is mainly based on her hope that it will alleviate her depression that she partly equates to boredom, and the opportunities that she hopes employment can give her to build new friendships.

Many of the women in the present study had previous or current issues with drug use. The barrier to employment for women is intensified when the woman is a drug user. Women who use drugs are reported to have increased mental health problems and barriers to employment compared to men (Webster et al. 2007). Women who have had drug problems are also likely to have significantly poorer health than that of the general population, which impacts again on ability to work. A Scottish study by Kemp and Neale (2005) examining factors that affected the employability of problem drug users reported that physical activity was often restricted due to health problems of drug users. For example, a significant number of respondents reported difficulty walking for longer than a mile, climbing stairs or carrying shopping bags. Over a third of respondents also reported that pain interfered in regular tasks such as housework. These types of physical limitations put restrictions on the type of roles that would be available to individuals with similar health problems.

The accounts by women who used the mentoring service in relation to employment were also supported by accounts from mentors and social work staff. A lack of education; work experience and a lack of opportunities for women to gain these skills were viewed to be barriers for employment:

SW2: I think we need to do more around training and employability...I've got one woman who I referred, she's really bright and has a lot of potential to do something, well she could do whatever she wanted really, very intelligent. But her confidence is so low, she's got addiction problems but there's very little out there that could help her build on what she's got. You do college applications or whatever but even just doing the application process can be pretty daunting so services around training and employment and education would be useful.

Although employment is viewed as an important outcome for desistance, workers must show caution and not set a woman up to fail by encouraging her to enter the job

market too early. The first goals which should be sought are stable accommodation, stable drug use, having income, being safe and free from abuse. Only after these needs have been realised can the woman focus on employment and training (Hester and Westmarland 2004).

Previous research that has emphasised the importance of bridging social capital in the lives of disadvantaged individuals claims that connections with individuals of more 'advantaged' social networks would lead to an improvement in circumstances, however there was very little evidence of this happening in those studies (Warr 2006). When there was evidence of this it was through employment (Dominguez and Watkins 2003) which was not a current option for the women in this study.

Finance was an area that intersected with many other areas that have been discussed and many of the issues women had were exacerbated by their poverty. The majority of women were recipients of welfare benefits. Sacro did not offer direct financial assistance, however mentors did assist with helping women to access benefits, some of which they were unaware they were eligible for. However, the women were still disadvantaged with a very low income and experienced barriers to gaining employment, related to their criminal record and lack of education/employment history. Although mentors could assist with accessing food parcels from the foodbank and welfare benefit entitlement the mentors could not help women to overcome poverty.

Impact on mentors

The majority of paid mentors described how difficult it was not to 'take things home' on occasion. For example, one mentor spoke about an experience when she had to report two women missing in one week. The scarcity of accommodation for women leaving prison meant that sometimes the mentor could not access housing for a woman. One mentor who had vast experience of working with both women and men in the criminal justice sector reported that the experience of working with women was more emotionally draining than working with men, as women were much more open and emotional than the men she had worked with. Women were more likely to disclose experiences of trauma, for example, and this could be particularly difficult for the mentor to hear. An evaluation of community services for women in the UK also reported that staff found working with women offenders emotionally draining (Radcliffe

and Hunter 2013). The authors reported that this experience was coupled with anxiety about job security because they were employed on short-term contracts. In the present study, some Sacro mentors also reported a concern with job security, as they were unsure if their contracts would be renewed.

When mentors were asked whether Sacro provided enough support to deal with this emotional aspect of the job, the majority stated that they had informal support from their colleagues and felt that this was sufficient. They also had 'support and supervision' meetings (approximately every 6 weeks) with their managers that allowed them to discuss difficult cases. There was also an acceptance they would never be able to completely 'switch off' from their work. Three mentors felt that it would be helpful to have additional support to deal with the emotional challenges of working with women. Types of support proposed by these mentors were: external counselling; debriefing from an external source and 'gardening leave' when appropriate:

M6: I think the emotional impact is massive and I think people who do this kind of work should have some form of support work for them or counselling for them. Even if it's just once every six months I think and I know that's what support and supervision is for but who's doing your support and supervision...obviously they are support workers themselves or CJ workers but maybe it would be better to have somebody separate from the organisation I think.

Inconsistent engagement was also viewed as a challenge for the mentors, and also had an emotional impact. Whether the woman engaged or not was often dependent on the circumstances of the woman, causing frustration:

M10: It's when you see people and you know there's everything in place for them but it's just not right at the time. People's thinking. Their old lives dragging them back to where they used to be. That's the worst bit about it but then you just need to be open minded and hope that you can...just you phoning them and speaking to them every now and again can help them come back round to it but yeah that's probably the most frustrating thing.

This frustration was also noted by mentors when women missed several appointments with outside agencies.

However, generally the workers did find the role rewarding and key benefits noted by paid mentors in addition to income were: depth of experience; satisfaction in helping others; and meeting women with different experiences. Volunteer mentors noted similar benefits and, additionally, found it to be an informative experience. One volunteer mentor did not expect to feel the same empathy towards 'offenders' as she might have done in other support work roles:

VM2: When it comes to working here [compared to working for another charity outwith the criminal justice system] I was always thinking in my head 'I'll have to be a lot more strict with these people, I'm going to have to put up a bit of a front because I'm not going to feel for them the same way I feel for other people. I won't be able to be empathetic or understand as much' but I do, the more I get to know her it gives me an understanding of what really goes on and what the real issues are. Especially with housing and benefits and stuff like that. It makes me appreciate what the real actual issues are with offending and the actual system.

These benefits have been noted in previous studies that documented benefits for volunteers involved in the criminal justice system (Paine et al. 2007; Morrow-Howell et al. 2009). Attitudes of others are very important for helping women to access social networks and bridging social capital. The ability of volunteering to help with this change of attitudes may be important in this process.

Peer mentoring

For some women, the experience of being mentored had contributed to their goal to become a mentor themselves:

Debbie: I want to be a mentor, I want to give something back. I believe it's not just about having a job and being happy in your job, I believe for me with so much self experience, I've got experience to give back and I think from my past to my present I can give something back. If I can change my life around, then I've got hope.

Generative opportunities such as volunteering may help to create opportunities for bridging and bonding social capital and facilitate desistance (McNeill and Maruna 2007; Uggen et al. 2004). An important component of mentoring for women who offend has been argued to be the opportunity for women to build relationships with people outside of their existing social networks (Gelsthorpe et al. 2007; Salgado et al. 2010). Peer mentoring may provide generative opportunities and also access to new relationships with people from different networks to their own. Barry (2012) argues that not only accumulation, but also expenditure of capital is required for desistance via both responsibility and generativity. One example of responsibility is the opportunity to look after children, however many of the women in the present study did not currently have this responsibility because their children had been taken into care.

Peer mentoring may also provide opportunities for empowerment according to the definition that 'empowerment refers to the development of a sense of collective influence over the social conditions of one's life' (Young 1994: 48) with women given the opportunity to work together sharing their experiences and having a direct influence over how the service operates. Although the majority of Sacro staff and social work staff agreed that peer mentoring would be a worthwhile service, they did identify some challenges and were sceptical about whether such a scheme would be possible. A difficulty with peer mentoring that was identified by Sacro staff was the risk of setting a woman up to fail if she was employed as a volunteer peer mentor and then experienced setbacks because she was not yet 'ready' to mentor someone else. Sacro staff were concerned that they may not be ready because it could bring the woman's own problems to the surface which they might find hard to deal with emotionally.

Mngr2: I can see why a lot of women want to do that because they want to give something back. But I think we need to be careful that we're not setting that woman up to fail by doing that at a time that's maybe not where she feels that she's ready but she's maybe not gave herself enough time and then she comes back and she relapses.

A senior social worker expressed aspirations to develop a mentoring scheme in the future, as she had a positive experience of a similar scheme previously:

SW9: One of the projects, I previously managed a pool of volunteers, both males and females who had successfully went through the system themselves and then were able to give that support. So there was a sense of probably credibility there where service users said, 'no, they actually have a sense of what we went through' rather than it just being folk, like academic or text book. They found them, I thought they saw them as credible.

Other staff viewed peer mentoring as an opportunity for personal development. They highlighted the importance of the presentation of 'real' opportunities for volunteer peer mentors to progress to full-time employment:

SW2: I haven't had any experience with that but I think it would be really good for both the women who are the mentors and their mentees, I think it would be what a mentor should be I suppose. Showing them that there is a way out. There's opportunities out there so I think it is something that should be looked at but I don't have any experience of that [...] getting the opportunities to get a job as a mentor would be good or becoming a social worker if that's what they want would also be good but they don't often get the opportunities.

SW7: I would hope that there would be an opportunity for development within the recovery volunteers for their sake as well, flexibility around the role about what's needed and for those who are volunteers rather than paid mentors that there's an upskilling process and training and opportunities for them to develop should they want to into paid roles. For some women their emotional needs will be so complex that they really should have a professional or paid mentor dealing with them or somebody with the skills to deal with them [...] I think there has to be something in it for the recovery volunteer and there's an importance in terms of their recovery and not just exploiting the person, that they have the possibility of requiring training and eventually paid in due course.

In relation to the quote by SW2 there could also be practical barriers to a woman being accepted on to a social work course depending on her offence. It is important

that the involvement of peer mentors is not tokenistic but provides a real opportunity for women to improve their circumstances.

Two Sacro managers noted that women should be encouraged to access networks outside of the criminal justice system:

Mngr2: I think [...] and this is my personal opinion, that they should go and experience other things and maybe come back to it [...] They all want to become a mentor or drugs worker. You can see the reason why, but you can also see that you're trying to get them away from thinking constantly about that and I don't think that sometimes they realise that by putting them back into that position they're actually jeopardising their recovery.

Mngr5: Sometimes I think women because their confidence is low and their self-esteem is low, they don't actually believe they are good at very much, and they might have a huge talent for something. So trying things out is probably a good thing.

The manager reflected on how a peer mentoring service might be approached within Sacro:

Mngr5: I think Sacro would be prepared to use peer mentors but we would just want to be careful that we weren't abusing that person, that that person was ready to take on the challenge and we're probably more likely to have recruited volunteers rather than peer mentors, I think you need to assess each person in turn to see if they're ready for it and right for it. Because I think there's a difference between wanting to do something and to be well motivated and well-intentioned but there might be something else that you see that would make it detrimental for that person to do. I think as long as it's well managed and engineered then it can work but I would imagine we would have less peer mentors that we would recruited mentors.

The general view of Sacro staff and social work staff was that peer mentoring should be developed, however it should be an important addition to the service that already existed and not a replacement. This would also offer women opportunities to build

social networks. The main advantages of peer mentoring were viewed to be the role modelling aspect, and the fact that women may be more likely to trust advice from someone who has had similar life experiences and therefore understood the types of challenges they faced.

O'Hagan (2011) suggested that incorporating peer mentors into a service that has managerialist concerns such as recording data may undermine a peer mentoring relationship because the mentoring relationship would be 'unequal.' Women in the present study who used the mentoring service did not raise any concerns regarding information recorded. However, many of the women had been involved with statutory services for a significant period of time, therefore recording of information may have become normalised. One potential challenge raised by social work staff was the likelihood that potential mentees would already 'know' their peer mentor due to the size of their social networks in some locations. Another concern was that it would be a difficult process to manage considering the resources that would be involved in implementing the programme and supervising staff.

Women were asked for their views on peer mentoring and whether they thought their experience of mentoring would have been different with a peer mentor. All of the women were extremely positive about their current mentor and therefore did not view similar life experiences as vital for their relationship:

Debbie: I don't question [my mentor] on her experience, whether she's went through this or she's not because I believe that each and every individual can give something back in their own way whether it's through self-experience or they're going to college or going to uni like yourself.

Christine: No you don't always need to have somebody that's gone through the same as you because they could have went through the same as you and just never did what you did.

One woman however, did state that she would prefer to have a mentor who had experienced similar difficulties in life as her, someone who understood her alcohol dependency and could accompany her to Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings.

Evaluations of services specifically for women who offend have suggested that peer support is valuable for the women who engage with these services (Radcliffe and Hunter 2013; Easton and Matthews 2011). However, this peer support can take many different forms and there is a lack of clarity around the definition. Peer support can take the form of group work, one-to-one mentoring or unarranged and informal meetings between women at a drop-in centre. It was a common assumption by the Sacro managers and staff that peer mentors were volunteers. If there is no opportunity for paid work from the peer role, then it will be limited in its benefit and attraction for women to become peer mentors. Although the integration of women with individuals who do not have a criminal record has been reported to be a key component of services for women, this understanding from peers is of significant benefit to the women (Radcliffe and Hunter 2013).

Measurement of outcomes

Homes Matrix and Key Performance Indicators

Staff identified the Homes Matrix Scores and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) as the main tools for measuring outcomes. The Homes Matrix, introduced in Chapter 4, was a tool that was used by the woman and mentor together to inform an action plan. The women would score themselves from 1-5 on each of the dimensions, from 'in crisis' to 'thriving.' The dimensions were: shelter; food/clothing/possessions; physical health; emotional health; sexual health; drug misuse; alcohol misuse; personal safety/risk; abusive/exploitative behaviour (victim of). Homes Matrix data was recorded on spreadsheets by staff. The researcher was able to access a copy of the spreadsheet from the Database Officer at Sacro. There was limited data available to measure outcomes from this information as only 45 files had more than one complete Homes Matrix over a period of time. There were also dates missing from a number of entries so it could not be known how much time had passed between each measurement. Data from 45 files suggested that the most common 'improvements' had been made in the following areas: emotional health (n=22); personal safety (n=24); financial situation (n=21); social relationships (n=21); reduction in reoffending (n=23); increased engagement with agencies (n = 25) and abusive and exploitative behaviour (n=23). Due to the small number of files and the missing data, I viewed these 'outcomes' with caution.

Only a small number of women spoke about the Homes Matrix during their interviews. The Homes Matrix was viewed by some mentors as a tool that allowed women to measure their own progress rather than as an outcome tool for the organisation.

M11: When you do reviews make sure that you take out the previous one so they can see 'ok we've done better on this' and 'we've went backwards on that' and then that's something that you can focus on as well. So I think it works well.

This also highlights the focus on the individual in terms of outcomes. The women are looking at needs such as 'housing' or 'finance' and whether they have progressed in these areas, and if not then these are targeted as areas that the woman should work on. Whether the woman has stable accommodation or income, are not necessarily factors that can be 'worked on' due to structural barriers such as poverty and a lack of suitable accommodation. Corcoran and Fox (2013:142) argue that creating an action plan in this way is a 'responsibilising strategy' as any changes in the areas specified such (e.g. housing or finance) are being linked directly to the actions of the woman. She is then viewed as solely responsible for any positive or negative situations she experiences in the future. The following mentor notes a similar concern:

M2: I do value the matrix, the assessment of their journey because it's a great way of showing this is what you've achieved in a much more positive way but there is a flip side to that as well because crisis can hit anybody at any time. They could be doing really well, they could have a crisis and you're showing them what's went wrong. It can have a huge adverse effect on that individual so you have to choose when to show that.

The quantitative measurements in the Homes Matrix do give an indication of areas in which positive outcomes might have been achieved, however the labels are quite vague. For example, an improvement in financial situation might suggest that a woman has had their benefit payments set up which is an improvement but it does not follow that they are not living in poverty. Alternatively, an improved financial situation may represent employment. A qualitative approach is needed to add context to these outcomes.

KPIs referred to data that was entered onto a database every month for every service across Sacro. The KPIs provided demographic information such as age; ethnicity; disability and additional needs. They also quantified the following areas: referrals; cases closed; groupwork sessions; reviews; open cases; assessments; individuals sign-posted to another agency; individuals on waiting list; individuals assessed as suitable and exit needs assessments. Table 5 details the total quantities of these measurements at the end of the period 2013-2014.

The categories that were measured as part of the KPIs were not related to the women's needs, such as accommodation, training and employment, or any of those areas that were focused on as part of the Homes Matrix. However, the KPIs were reported by mentors to be the main outcome tool at the time, although they are arguably more accurately described as outputs of the service. The information from the table shows that 19 reviews were completed over the course of a year. Between April - October there were no reviews completed even though there were 355 cases recorded as 'open' across the whole year. As reviews are supposed to take place every 6-8 weeks, this seems like a small number or it may be that data is missing. There were only 8 exit needs assessments completed out of 29 closed cases suggesting that 21 of these cases were unplanned exits. When I queried the KPI information I was informed that the KPIs were an area that was under development. Value is often placed on quantitative information without considering these types of discrepancies, it is important that claims are not made based on information that is not reliable.

The KPI categories do not give an indication of the outcomes that are important to women that have been discussed in the present study, instead they are focused purely on the quantity. This was a concern for some of the staff:

Mngr1: I find a lot of the information that I put into the KPIs, I don't understand why they need it. It's very similar with the database and things like that. A lot of it is collecting stats for stats sake so how useful is that in terms of us being able to progress with the support that we provide? I don't know.

This KPI information was often provided to funders as evidence that the service was 'working' even though according to mentors it was not reflective of the key outcomes of the service.

Table 5: Information from key performance indicators reports 2013 - 2014

	Month (Apr 13 – Mar 14)												
Activities	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Referrals	4	7	2	0	8	1	1	9	8	12	9	27	88
Cases closed	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	2	6	7	7	4	29
Groupwork	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	5
Reviews	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	6	2	2	6	19
Signposted	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	5	16	6	19	54
Assessment	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	3	1	1	3	1	13
Open cases	3	4	5	5	10	9	8	37	65	59	66	84	355
Waiting list	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
Suitable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	8	7	10	31
Exit assessment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	2	0	0	8

Carlen (2008: 4) reported similar findings when funders of a new women's prison were provided with information that the new programmes within the prison were meeting official objectives when actually staff were working towards their own informal objectives based on common sense. She argues that staff must 'act as if they are' meeting these objectives. As noted by Carlen this has implications for policy as it justifies programmes in place that may not be meeting the needs of women and also the criminalisation of women.

At the time of field work I was advised in addition to KPIs being developed/improved, that a new case management system was being developed for the mentoring service. Mentors who worked as part of the Shine²⁴ mentoring service also completed different paperwork, and I was advised that all mentors would be adopting this paperwork. Although it may be the case that these changes in measuring data will result in improvements in the way outcomes are measured, these regular changes also

²⁴ Mentoring service within Sacro and operated as part of a Public Social Partnership. Further information provided in Chapter 1.

suggest that the aim of mentoring is also subject to change. This may be due to the necessity to record outcomes that are attractive to funders. Again this highlights the implications of voluntary organisations reliant on government funding. Their services have to be in line with the favoured goals of the funder.

Limitations of quantitative data

The accounts from mentors that questioned the reliability of quantitative methods when looking at the changes in the lives of the women, also supports the research of Carlen (2008), as respondents in the study stated that they were working hard to complete paperwork that proved to be meeting objectives that they did not actually think were achievable. A mentor from the present study describes the limitations of quantitative measures for outcomes she views to be important:

M4: You can't measure soft outcomes and the things like that...you just really couldn't do that with control groups and everything like that... the problem that we have with evaluation, you look at the start at the end. A whole host of stuff could have went on there. A woman could have been doing brilliant for five months and on the sixth month she falls apart and that's what you're getting measured at the end so quite often it doesn't show the story of these women. Or it could be that they're doing really well when they first get referred to you but everything falls apart and you pick it all up. And when she leaves she's doing really well. So it looks like she's just done well the whole way through and you don't see all the messy crap in the middle [...] Women are all so so different and everything affects them different. So you can give them headings and all that kind of stuff but I don't think it's ever going to give a true reflection really of what happens. But I don't have a better way of doing it so I can't really say.

Although many of the mentors believed that mentoring could help women to stay out of the criminal justice system in the long-term, they recognise that this is very difficult or impossible to measure:

M5: I 've been working with her since last July and she's offence free, she's stable on her script, she's had a couple of blips but when I close her case I

just have to hope that she stays on that straight and narrow but you just cannae tell.

The appropriateness of measuring the impact of mentoring using only quantitative data was also questioned by a number of Sacro managers who felt that it did not capture the whole picture of the women's lives:

Mngr2: I don't think it's just about numbers. I think it's about stories as well because qualitative and quantitative, I think you've got to have that balance where yeah you can have your outcomes and you can have your numbers and people achieve this outcome and that but it's about the women's story and sometimes I think the most powerful part of the outcomes is actually the women's story about their journey.

Mngr4: You know because our stats say planned closures and unplanned closures but you might have done a heck of a lot of work with these women and there's been a wee blip or maybe they've got on well. I think that's maybe the challenges about how we report that and how we report, it's not just stats. I think we need to have some narrative behind our stats as well to say that 'ok we've worked with service user F for 3 months but they've disengaged but this is what they've achieved within that 3 months, this is how we helped them to move on.' Sometimes I think we just need a wee bit more narrative, a wee bit more case studies from the service user, rather than just looking at black and white stats.

Gelsthorpe and Hedderman (2012) acknowledged the difficulties associated with measuring reoffending due to small numbers of female offenders and low levels of prior offending and state that the measurement of reconviction rates did not provide a complete picture of outcomes due to the complex nature of the desistance process. Being able to demonstrate positive outcomes is key for the sustainability of a project such as the Sacro mentoring service. The sustainability of positive outcomes is a challenge, even during the time of the mentoring relationship. For example, mentors recalled situations where they had worked with a woman for a period of time and made progress, however circumstances resulted in her disengagement from the service.

Hedderman et al. (2011) argued that quantitative measures cannot detect small changes in confidence that are achieved through activities or positive relationships with workers. The authors stated that measuring services like Together Women using only quantitative measures will not evidence the most valuable components of the service. This could result in funding being stopped because quantitative information does not reflect the value of the service. Mentors in the present study also noted that the requirement of collecting data took valuable time away from working with women:

M3: Every time they bring out a new piece of paperwork or a new database, evaluation tool or whatever, that's time you're having away from the service users. I think you're actually watering down the service and I totally get that you need to be able to prove that you're doing what you say you're doing but it could be simplified.

A number of mentors stated that the volume of paperwork was too high, it was repetitive, and they did not receive any feedback from the information that they submitted. Generally, mentors felt that paperwork was needed to provide evidence that the service was working but they felt that it could be reduced. Two mentors stated mentors and support staff should be consulted more on development of paperwork because they knew what outcomes were the most important for their client group. One mentor held the view that there should be much more service user involvement in terms of paperwork and evaluation tool design.

There are difficulties with measuring the impact of any service on future reoffending, because it cannot be stated with any accuracy what future reoffending would have been if the support or the intervention was not in place (Gelsthorpe 2012). There are various other factors that could influence whether a person would offend or not and the same motivation that is facilitating engagement with a service may be associated with reduced reoffending rather than the intervention itself. In addition, when a service user begins to trust a support worker they may reveal previously undisclosed information about their circumstances. This can give the impression that an intervention is actually having a detrimental effect on the person because the true extent of their problems have now been disclosed (Gelsthorpe 2012). The processes of evaluation used by an organisation are going to be determined by factors such as their size and their focus (Gelsthorpe and Hedderman 2012). As Sacro is an

organisation that offers services all over Scotland, then they are not focused on women only and this has implications for the types of evaluation tools that they will use.

Funding and sustainability

Funding and sustainability were key challenges identified by mentors and staff, as services were normally funded on a yearly basis and with little funding available to carry out extra activities with women such as group work or group outings. The short term funding also had implications for the mentoring relationship directly as mentors were not in a position to guarantee that the service was available longer term. The uncertainty of sustained funding impacted upon the commitment that mentors could make to women, for example, they could not guarantee that their support would be available for as long as women needed:

M7: With the women's mentoring service, I'm very loathe to say to a woman that I'll be here for as long as you need me. As much as I would love to but I have to be practical and realise that if the service is withdrawn then I don't want any woman to turn round and say, 'you said to me' and I have to be honest.

An important part of the exit strategy for the Sacro mentoring service is the reassurance given to women that they can return to Sacro should they need support in the future. However, if future funding is directed more towards Public Social Partnerships, which is the case for Sacro's additional new mentoring service, then this future offer of support from Sacro specifically could not be guaranteed. Women may be redirected instead to a 'partner agency' and not Sacro. Similarly, a discontinuation of funding would also take away this option for women to return for support in the future.

A number of mentors were also concerned for their own employment due to the short term funding. This was also recognised by managers of the service:

Mngr5: Short term funding is a real barrier because with short term funding you might get some good outcomes but when you're employing people to provide mentoring, then at some point half way along whatever the funding

period is, people start to look for different jobs and if the success of mentoring is based on real solid relationships, sometimes when people go it can really have an impact on how successful the service is going to be.

Burgess et al. (2011) in an evaluation of the Women in Focus project, reviewed in Chapter 2, also found that short-term funding had a significant impact on the likelihood of support workers remaining at the service when they did not have a guarantee of longer-term employment. They also found that the staff turnover could be particularly detrimental for women who were experiencing a positive relationship with a worker and it was being cut short. These were often women who had experienced many negative relationships in the past, so the positive relationship with their support worker had been of significant value. There was also an acknowledgement by both Sacro staff and social work staff that the recent increase in government funding to mentoring for female offenders may not be sustained:

SW2: I worry that you know there's been a change in the way women offenders are being worked with in the last few years because of the research that has been done, but the government are very quick at jumping on one fad to next fad to next fad, so maybe something else will come along that they want to put money into and the money will dry up but I think it should be long term. It would be useful if it was long term but who knows.

A Sacro manager was concerned that funding was also dependent on what was the 'flavour of the month' with the current Government, admitting they were fortunate that currently mentoring was benefiting from this. However, she was aware that mentoring could fall out of favour and Sacro would have to be proactive in locating alternative sources for funding.

Mentors also noted a connection between the data they were required to record and funding. There are also likely to be increased demands for quantified evidence of outcomes as competition for funding increases and the ability for Sacro to maintain this flexibility with regards to the length of the mentoring relationship may be reduced. This is evidenced in the Shine mentoring service which Sacro also deliver, where the model states that ideally the woman will be mentored for a period of six months. This also reflects increasing marketisation within the criminal justice sector. Voluntary

organisations must adapt their service to meet the demands of funders in an increasingly competitive market (Stacey 2012). Radcliffe and Hunter (2013) also noted in their evaluation of community justice centres for women in the UK that competition for funding could impact on the quality of services. This was as a result of partnerships being formed to deliver services with some partners not having any expertise in the area of criminal justice.

Generally, mentors and staff held the view that a lack of sustainable funding would continue to present a challenge long-term, considering limitations for many organisations in the voluntary sector. All of the social work staff stated that they hoped that mentoring would be a long-term service on offer to women, however they stated as it was outwith their control, they did not know whether it would continue to be funded.

Summary

This chapter demonstrated the impact that mentoring had on the lives of women in the short-term. Engagement with agencies, emotional wellbeing and confidence were the most commonly cited outcomes by women, and were related to support in meeting the immediate needs of the women who accessed the service. The majority of women did not view reducing reoffending as relevant to them, in that they did not offend impulsively but it was related to other issues. Mentoring did not appear to have a significant impact on women gaining employment or entering education, which has been argued to be important for desistance. Many of the women could not work due to health reasons. Other structural barriers also prevented women from entering employment due to the lack of jobs available for those with little recent work experience. Relationships as an outcome was discussed. The relationship with the mentor was highly valued by the women and provided an important reduction in social isolation, but the findings did not support the view of relational theory that women viewed it as an opportunity to 'learn' about or 'practice' positive relationships.

Confidence and self-esteem are arguably not key issues when compared to addiction, mental health problems, homelessness and poverty, however they were viewed as key outcomes of mentoring, which reflects the barriers of mentoring for making lasting changes in these areas and also the need for changes to be made in areas outside of the criminal justice system. Despite the aims of mentoring identified by mentors and

staff to develop the skills of women and help them to make 'better choices', the benefits of mentoring according to the women who accessed it was centred around the practical support and emotional support they received through the mentoring relationship. The aims of the service and some of the activities represented an individualised approach which may be reflective of the context in which mentors were working.

Mentors generally stated that they experienced their role as rewarding, however, they found the role emotionally draining at times due to the complex issues of the women and the also the frustration of inconsistent engagement of those they mentored. Although the majority of mentors felt that they had enough support within the organisation to cope with this emotional component of the role, there was also a suggestion that an external source of counselling or gardening leave may be beneficial. The nature of the mentoring employment contracts also presented concerns about job security for staff.

Although peer mentoring was not a current component of the Sacro mentoring model, there was mixed views on whether it should be implemented. The majority of staff agreed that it would be beneficial in theory but in practice, it may be difficult to manage and recruit the appropriate people. There were concerns that women may feel disempowered if they provided peer mentoring before they were 'ready'. Many of the women stated that they would like to take part in peer mentoring or another peer service in the future, stating that they wished to 'give something back' in line with generative theories of desistance.

The prioritisation of quantitative data that exists in the criminal justice system has implications for the outcomes that are viewed as an accurate indicator of the impact of services. These outcomes in the present study were also based on data that were unreliable. Assumptions are then based on this data which is problematic as it follows that claims are made about the service that may be inaccurate. Sacro staff and social work staff highlighted the importance of 'modest' outcomes that included behaviours such as the mentee making a telephone call or being able to leave their home for an appointment. Mentors viewed it as an unrealistic goal to always reduce reoffending of the women during the period of the mentoring relationship, but these modest outcomes were taken as measures of success. If staff are working towards different

outcomes than those prioritised in reports to funders, then policy makers may have an inaccurate view of the purpose and impact of mentoring. These observations suggest that mentors were 'acting as if' they are reducing reoffending but they are actually working towards their own objectives that they view as more achievable, and assuming they will lead to a long-term reduction in reoffending (Carlen 2008).

This prioritisation of quantitative data when evaluating services is highly relevant in a sector where there is high competition for short-term funding. Mentors spoke about the increase in the volume of data they were expected to collect and associated this with new sources of funding. This had a direct impact on the service that mentors offered to women, in that it reduced the time that they could spend with each woman. As noted in Chapter 6, women who accessed mentoring valued it because of the intensive support mentoring could offer compared to other services. Some staff also suggested that short-term funding had an impact on staff retention, which again may have an impact on the service being delivered, if women are being matched with more than one mentor over a short period of time. It is clear that mentoring was beneficial for women who used the service, as it helped them to resolve some of the difficulties associated with their poverty, mental health and addiction at least in the short-term but the context within which mentors are delivering mentoring restricts the changes that can be made to the circumstances of women.

Chapter 8 - Conclusion

The main aim of this thesis was to answer the research question: what are the goals, processes and impact of mentoring? This was explored through meeting the following objectives:

- Explore the views and experiences of the women who participate in mentoring;
- Identify the issues of women who access the mentoring service;
- Describe the characteristics, operations and goals of the mentoring schemes;
- Explore the contribution made by volunteer mentors;
- Explore the impact of mentoring for women who use the service.

A recent Scottish Government appointed Commission on Women offenders recommended mentoring as an approach that could meet the specific needs of women offenders and reduce reoffending (Angiolini et al. 2012). Following on from this report, substantial funding was allocated to the development and expansion of mentoring services for women in the criminal justice system. This reflected a confidence in a service despite limited research into the processes and 'effectiveness' of mentoring. This thesis aimed to engage critically with the mentoring process, in the context of Sacro's mentoring service and to consider whether this service offered a unique approach for women. It was important to determine whether the assumptions underlying mentoring were based on an individualised framework and a responsibilising approach or whether it did offer an innovative practice based on the lives of women. The findings are limited in that they are based on one specific service where the study was framed. Although the findings cannot be applied to all mentoring projects, they do provide insight into considerations for other similar services.

There are several difficulties with the existing literature on mentoring. Mentoring projects vary in their definitions, there is not sufficient evidence to claim that mentoring does result in reoffending or other outcomes and it is unclear what makes mentoring distinct from other services such as support work or befriending. This thesis addressed these gaps, focusing specifically on the relevance for women in the criminal justice system in a Scottish context, considering whether mentoring addressed issues relevant to women using a feminist methodology. This was achieved largely through 50 interviews in total, with 19 women who used the

mentoring service (including two follow-up interviews), 11 paid mentors, 3 volunteer mentors, 9 social work staff and 6 other Sacro staff members.

The first section of this chapter provides a summary of the main findings of the research focusing on both the practice and underlying assumptions of mentoring. This is followed by a discussion of implications for policy and practice and the limitations of the present study. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the thesis contribution and final reflections.

The main findings

A profile of women who accessed mentoring

Life experiences of poverty, addiction and trauma were common among women who accessed the mentoring service. All of the women were unemployed and the majority had little education or recent employment. Consequently, financial difficulties, problems with drug and alcohol use and health concerns were prevalent in the lives of participants. All of the women in the current study had been convicted of at least one offence, with the majority having more than one conviction. The offences were typically related to drug and alcohol use and included breach of the peace and shoplifting. A high proportion of women also experienced social isolation. Many were separated from their children as they were in care. Women commonly reported experiencing depression and anxiety with some reporting the use of drugs or alcohol when they felt distressed. Some women also reported being stigmatised and feelings of shame related to their offending and marginalisation. The characteristics of the women who accessed Sacro's mentoring service reflected those of women generally in the criminal justice system who have experienced disadvantage throughout their lives (Gelsthorpe et al. 2007; Baldry 2010).

Overview of mentoring in practice

To be eligible for the mentoring service, women had to be subject to a statutory order, or have recently left prison. Mentoring encompassed numerous roles including advocate, befriender and advisor. It also included substantial practical support that was referred to by some staff as the 'support work' aspect of mentoring. Many staff did not view this aspect of their role to be mentoring. It was therefore easier to describe mentoring by its function which included crisis intervention, practical support and emotional support.

The role of the mentor depended on the current difficulties of the woman they were working with and this would vary depending on whether a mentor was supporting a woman leaving prison, or a woman in the community who was subject to a statutory order. Mentoring was not used as an alternative to custody but as a post-release support for women. It was a tool used to deal with the impact of imprisonment on women's circumstances. Additionally, for women who had not accessed mentoring in custody it provided support in the community through targeting 'needs' that were viewed to be linked to their offending but which reflected their wider disadvantage. Both types of support were aimed at reducing the risk of reoffending and outcomes that were viewed to be related to offending. Much of the crisis intervention support was related to the impact of imprisonment on circumstances and therefore challenges the rationale that prison is appropriate for women whose offences are related to marginalisation and do not pose a risk to the safety of the public.

Practical support by the mentor was crucial for helping women to respond to difficulties related to poverty, which reflected deficiencies in the welfare system. Mentors often accessed food parcels for the women; attempted to secure accommodation and set up benefits. Emotional support was provided via home visits; social outings to a café, or through talking on route to an appointment. Appointments sometimes only consisted of a 'chat' between the mentor and woman, and in this way the mentoring role was akin to a befriending role. The process through which women exited the service varied. Some women became uncontactable, others had planned exits or were allocated a volunteer mentor towards the end of the service. There was a small contribution from volunteer mentors in the process of mentoring. Although there were aspects of befriending in the paid mentor role, the volunteer mentoring role consisted almost entirely of a befriending type role. There was limited practical support, crisis intervention and limited paperwork associated with the volunteer role.

Operationally it appeared that mentoring did not offer something significantly different from other services in the criminal justice system. It did not seem to be different to support work or befriending. For some women, their mentor was largely a source of emotional support and someone to talk to, whereas for others, their mentoring meetings encompassed mainly practical support.

Why mentoring?

Previous studies in line with the pathways perspective of female offending have suggested a rationale for mentoring that is in line with relational theory and based on the view that many women who have offended have experienced abusive relationships previously and the mentoring relationship provides an opportunity for a positive relationship. Authors have also linked this with social capital, claiming that the relationship with the mentor can activate types of social capital. The present study supported the findings from Brown and Ross (2010a) that mentors provided social capital via emotional support, however there was less evidence of the second type of social capital that Brown and Ross described. They argued that mentors also provided social capital indirectly through advocacy behaviours, such as providing housing references for women or speaking on their behalf at court. It was the 'respected' position in the community that was argued to be important for the participants in Brown and Ross's study. In the current study, there was not significant evidence of this type of social capital. The concept of bridging social capital, although useful in conceptualising a potential route to improved circumstances, can be overly simplistic and does not take into account the magnitude of barriers such as poverty.

The women who used the service generally viewed their mentor as a friend and not a role model, suggesting that the value of the relationship for women was the emotional support and reduced social isolation, rather than an opportunity to model the behaviours of their mentor. This was also reflected in accounts of women where they valued their mentor because it was 'someone to talk to'. Mentoring encompassed practical and emotional support and a large component of mentoring was concerned with helping women to overcome problems that existed in the welfare system. This included helping women to access benefit payments or taking women to appointments, suggesting that rather than mentors 'fixing' women's thinking styles or attitudes they were 'fixing' problems in the system.

There was a disconnect between the key issues identified by mentors and women in Chapter 5, and the goals and aims of mentoring which were described by mentors and staff in Chapter 6. Although mentors expressed understanding of the difficult circumstances in the lives of the women they worked with and expressed empathy, when asked to state the goals of mentoring, they highlighted the importance of outcomes related to an individualised approach. Empowerment, reduced reoffending

and responsibility were introduced as key goals of mentoring. These goals of empowerment and the development of life skills and improved decision making have been referred to as responsabilising strategies. The present study supports the research by Pollack (2005) that services designed for women in recent years are at least partly focused on the goal of becoming a 'responsible citizen.' However, the women who used the service held a different understanding of mentoring than mentors and staff. Women did not talk about the importance of reoffending, or becoming responsible or empowered. Mentors associated 'empowerment' with information and the ability to make choices, without the acknowledgement that their choices were very limited in many cases. It placed responsibility on women to accept and overcome structural barriers such as poverty. It also refused to acknowledge that women may be gaining empowerment via illegitimate means, whereas they cannot obtain it through legitimate means (Anderson 2005).

Although accommodation, employment opportunities, health care and access to benefits were viewed as necessary for women to improve their wellbeing, there was also a common belief by mentors and staff that the development of skills, providing information and role modelling of appropriate behaviours would result in a reduction in reoffending for women. Staff noted the importance of working with women to change their behaviours but also acknowledged that circumstances could prevent them from making desired changes at time. They recognised that women had been subject to difficult social conditions but still maintained that a lack of skills and information was associated with offending behaviour. The focus on the individual and the lack of consideration of context does not imply that mentors were not understanding of the structural barriers that women faced but it is likely reflective of the remit of the service.

The focus on individual behaviour and attitudes by mentors when discussing the goals of mentoring combined with the empathy and understanding they expressed about the circumstances of women supports the research by Corcoran and Fox (2013) who also found this inconsistency of staff perceptions. They reported that staff revealed views in line with neo-liberal concerns when they emphasised the importance of women being responsible and becoming empowered. However, they also showed empathy towards the welfare concerns of the women they worked with. Similar to the research by Corcoran and Fox (2013), although mentoring has been advocated as an innovative service in that it meets the specific needs of women, there are underlying

assumptions that attribute responsibility for disadvantage onto the individual. In this sense, mentoring is similar to other services in the criminal justice system that focus on behaviour and attitudes and fail to challenge the structural barrier of poverty.

This also supports the research of Carlen (2008) who found that staff were delivering support to women according to different objectives than those specified in the formal objectives. The staff in a women's prison in Carlen's study were 'acting as if' they were delivering the official objectives through designing programmes and completing paperwork. However, they also stated explicitly that they knew these programmes did not work for women but did not report this to funders. Similarly, in the current study, mentors raised questions about the suitability of 'mentoring' as a label to define the service they were delivering. Some mentors reported that the definition of 'mentor' did not describe the service they delivered but they completed paperwork and 'acted as if' they were delivering mentoring. In practice much of the support they provided women with was in response to their immediate needs rather than skills development and role modelling which they associated with the 'true' definition of a mentor. The importance of the label 'mentor' was recognised by workers. Increasing popularity of mentoring had resulted in mentors undergoing specific 'accredited' mentoring training. However, some of this training was not relevant to the work that mentors delivered. This may reflect an increasing marketisation of mentoring services at a time when funding is competitive in the third sector.

The findings also showed that staff were working towards their own objectives and identified their own measures of success which included modest outcomes such as: a woman making a telephone call or being able to leave her home for an appointment. In practice, however, it seemed that mentoring was focused around emotional support, taking women to appointments and accessing welfare benefits rather than the development of social skills. It appeared to be only a small component of the service. However, describing mentoring in this way even if it is not delivered in line with these goals has implications for policy and practice. This will be discussed further in the next section.

The understanding of 'gender-specific' service by Sacro mentors and management was also defined in terms of the individual. Sacro management considered their service to be gender focused and understood this to mean that workers understood

the unique needs of women in the criminal justice system. How this understanding of the needs of women translated to practice was less clear. Workers approached women differently through providing more emotional support than they did with male service users (in previous roles) showing patience and flexibility when working with women. Staff did not generally view their approach as 'gender-sensitive' but rather 'person-centred' stating that their practice was based on the needs of the individual rather than the gender of the person they were working with. The mentoring process did not include components which have been argued to be necessary for gender-specific approaches such as raising awareness and campaigning on behalf of women who have been criminalised (Kilroy et al. 2013).

Impact of mentoring

The women who used the service valued the benefits they gained from agencies they had accessed via mentoring. The most common types of agencies were employment, healthcare and counselling services. Engaging with these agencies allowed women to resolve some of the difficulties they faced related to poverty, addiction and victimisation. For women who used the service, it appeared that the increase in support or resources that was delivered by agencies was the most important aspect of this outcome rather than learning how to interact or behave. Increased confidence was another impact of the service. Women related this to their basic needs being met, being praised and encouraged by their mentor and a reduction in social isolation. However, this study could not assess whether these gains in confidence were sustained long-term. Mentors viewed increases in confidence as being evident when women managed to carry out simple tasks by themselves, for example, making a telephone call or making a shop purchase. The relationship that the women had with their mentor was one of the most valued aspects of the support. However, many of the women had not developed new relationships outside of mentoring. Although, some women did attend group work sessions within the criminal justice sector, and valued the social aspects of these sessions.

Mentoring did not impact on employment during the course of the mentoring relationship. Attempts were made to connect women with educational courses but this was rare in the sample of women interviewed. Mentoring had little impact on financial situation or on drug or alcohol use directly, as women normally met with an addictions worker separately. However, the emotional support provided by the mentor also

helped some women to refrain from using drugs or alcohol when they were feeling distressed. Mentors did assist women with accessing accommodation, but the standard of accommodation available was sometimes of low quality and in an undesirable location for the women. This was outwith the control of the mentor and in some geographical locations it was very difficult to secure accommodation. There was also little choice of quality.

Many of the women who used the mentoring service did not view offending as an issue that required specific attention, while others stated that mentoring had helped to reduce their reoffending. Mentors and staff believed that addressing other needs would result in a reduction in reoffending. The majority of mentors shared the view that mentoring should focus on modest outcomes that they viewed as evidence of long-term reduction in reoffending. These outcomes were viewed to be achievable compared to the organisational goal of a long-term reduction in reoffending. Modest outcomes included: a woman making a telephone call by herself; leaving her home for an appointment and completing a form without assistance. Some of the outcomes which the mentors viewed as important were similar to women, including improvements in confidence and self-esteem.

There was a prioritisation of quantitative data within Sacro when measuring the impact of Sacro services, via Key Performance Indicators and recording scores from the Homes Matrix tool. However this data was often incomplete and so was unlikely to be an accurate measure of the impact of mentoring for women. Observations were made during the research that suggested that measures of success of mentoring were relative to the circumstances that women had experienced prior to engaging with the service. Although women may have reduced their offending during mentoring, some accounts from women suggested that their poverty remained after mentoring and they continued to suffer due to their marginalisation. This is in line with research by Nugent and Schinkel (2016) who found that people can experience 'pains of desistance' after they have stopped offending including social isolation, loneliness, goal failure and a lack of hope. Although the majority of participants in the study by Nugent and Schinkel were male and long-term prisoners, there is scope to explore whether there are particular 'pains' relevant to women and how these can be prevented.

Implications for policy, practice and future research

The women in the present study valued their mentoring relationships and offered little criticism of the service. Women may have been reluctant to criticise the service because they did not want it to reflect badly on their mentor with whom they shared a good relationship. However, it remains that women spoke extremely positively towards mentoring and favoured it over other services that they had encountered. They benefitted significantly from the intensive support that mentors were able to offer them. Mentoring supported women throughout their time with the service, however, the potential impact in the long-term on the lives of women may be restricted by their circumstances. Although women reported gains in confidence and self-esteem, without opportunities to maintain these gains and the lack of significant change to circumstances it may be difficult for women to benefit from these positive outcomes. The confidence and hope that was established during the mentoring relationship could be damaged if not met with real opportunities to make lasting changes to circumstances. As responsibility for outcomes was partly allocated to the women, then this may lead to feelings of distress should women find it difficult to make changes in their lives. Government policies such as cuts to employment benefits and increased use of benefit sanctions, for example, could undermine the confidence and self-esteem of the women.

Opportunities for personal development and new relationships and networks may allow women to utilise gains in confidence. As many of the women showed a desire for opportunities to volunteer and future employment, then links to these types of roles may be beneficial and contribute to lasting change. However, it should not be assumed that this is a goal for all women, and the focus solely on employment as a long-term goal denies women other choices. Opportunities to improve circumstances may be developed from an involvement in peer mentoring for those women that desire this type of role. Peer mentoring and similar volunteer opportunities could provide women with an opportunity to use their own experiences to benefit others and facilitate empowerment. However, peer mentoring and other volunteer roles should lead to employment opportunities, and allow for significant changes in the lives of women through an increase in resources. Increasing access to other networks outside the criminal justice system, outwith employment and volunteering, may also allow women to develop positive relationships and both bonding and bridging social capital.

Although mentors and staff expressed an aim to empower women and deliver an approach that was gender focused, in practice their model lacked a consideration of context. Presenting women with opportunities to contribute to Sacro policy documents, meetings, the development of the service and submissions to government enquiries may facilitate empowerment for the women (Young 1994). Increased involvement by Sacro and women who use the service in campaigning against discrimination could also empower women and acknowledge the inequalities that have contributed to their criminalisation. Projects dedicated to raising awareness on the behalf of women and challenging stereotypes of women offenders could serve a similar purpose. This may not be feasible for Sacro, however there may be possibilities to link in with other agencies that offer this approach. The current approach of Sacro, deals only with the symptoms of social problems. That is not to say that mentoring can be expected to address all problems that exist for women, but this study highlights the barriers for mentors to make significant changes in the lives of women when there are funding cuts to services and resources outwith the criminal justice system.

Although there were many women who disengaged with mentoring, it was not possible to contact those women in the present study. In order to meet the requirements of ethical approval it was necessary that women were contacted via their Sacro workers, and those who did not have a positive experience with the service may have not have been contactable. Workers may have decided not to contact specific women who they expected to offer criticism of the service. There is a necessity for future research to include input from women who disengaged with mentoring at an early stage, rather than assuming that they 'are not ready.' There were difficulties in accessing women for follow-up interviews which resulted in the absence of a longitudinal component of this study. Consequently, this study was focused largely on an exploration of the mentoring aims, goals, processes and short-term outcomes, providing an in-depth account of these factors. Future research should attempt to explore the long-term impact of the mentoring process through follow up of women who have used the service several months or years following their exit from mentoring.

Many of the mentors described feeling emotionally drained when working with women due to the disclosure of traumatic experiences and the high level of need and

disadvantage in the lives of the women. Although many of the mentors felt that they had sufficient support from their colleagues, additional support should also be made available to mentors. This may be in the form of externally counselling or leave. It may also be beneficial for mentors to have opportunities to meet on a regular basis to provide mutual support and discuss practice.

Sacro received all funding for the mentoring service from the Scottish Government and statutory sector. The mentoring service was therefore focused on the priorities and objectives of the government. There was a limit in the extent to which Sacro could develop a unique approach to their service as they were required to develop their service in line with the requirements of funders. This was evident from the changes in systems and outcome measurement that were frequently being adopted. It suggested that the underlying philosophy of the mentoring service was flexible depending on requirements of the funders. This was also evident from the changes to the service since its original implementation, with only the most 'chaotic' of women being referred to the service. When the service was first designed there were opportunities for women who had less complex needs to engage with mentoring through self-referral, which was rare at the time of this study. It may be the case that these women would benefit the most from mentoring because the negative impact of the criminal justice system is less severe than those with many convictions. They may have less complex issues and be more likely to engage with mentoring.

The short-term nature and uncertainty of future funding may prevent services like Sacro from developing innovative services or making radical changes to their service, due to concerns about funding. Funding for third sector organisations in criminal justice is becoming more competitive at a time when there are also cuts to services outside of the criminal justice system, for example, the welfare system. As these cuts are likely to send women further into poverty, they will have a direct impact on the service that mentors are expected to provide. Future research could investigate further, the importance of funding on third sector goals and philosophy in the area of women's mentoring, and the impact of funding cuts outwith the criminal justice system on the role of mentors. There should also be a consideration of the adoption of qualitative measures to evaluate the service internally. This may offer insights that would not be detected by statistics and give a 'voice' to women who use the service.

Women understood mentoring to be about relational support and the practical support when they needed it to help them overcome difficulties they experienced largely due to poverty and addiction. Mentors also understood mentoring in this way but in addition they stated that mentoring gave women the information, and skills 'required' to make better choices and therefore stop offending. In practice, however, women who accessed mentoring and did reduce their offending were receiving valuable support to overcome problems in the welfare system and a lack of resources in communities, rather than developing 'life skills.' If the key value of mentoring is viewed by policy makers as providing women with skills to make better choices, then it will be assumed that women who offend are deficient rather than viewing their offending as related to inequality. This will prevent policies being put forward that challenge the inequalities of poverty, addiction and experiences of abuse that many women who offend have experienced throughout their lives.

Contribution and final reflections

Existing research on mentoring for women in the criminal justice system has not engaged critically with mentoring practice or theory. This study addressed this gap and demonstrated that mentoring is not based on one theory but rather touches on numerous theories, some of which are incompatible. The structure of mentoring also aligned with models of self-reform and responsibility which have been evident in other services for women in the criminal justice system. However, there was also a concern with welfare needs which appears to be incompatible with theories focused on self-reform and responsibilisation.

This raised questions about the uniqueness of the mentoring service in its inability to challenge the circumstances of poverty, addiction and experiences of abuse in women's lives that had contributed to their criminalisation. The mentoring service was located in the criminal justice system. It was not utilised as an alternative to custody, and instead was focused on repairing the harm caused by the women's marginalisation and subsequent imprisonment. While women are in the criminal justice system context this necessarily prioritises a focus on individual deficits, because they are judged to be deviant due to their offending.

This thesis adds to existing literature on mentoring and the criminal justice system by providing an in-depth analysis of all stages of the mentoring process. It also contributes to literature around gender in the criminal justice system through a focus

on whether the issues that women have experienced, related to their gender, have been addressed via mentoring. This thesis went beyond that offered by evaluations of mentoring services for women in Scotland, in that it engaged critically with all aspects of mentoring. To date there has been a lack of research into the underlying assumptions of mentoring and whether it is a service that in practice does meet the needs of women in the criminal justice system. Through uncovering and prioritising the beliefs of women who use the service and exploring the accounts of staff, this study was able to address this gap and suggested that although the rhetoric of mentoring was one that implied that mentoring was an individualistic approach, in practice a substantial component of mentoring was concerned with mentors 'trying' to fix problems outwith the criminal justice system, highlighting the need for wider policy change to implement significant changes in the lives of women.

Appendix 1 Table of referral criteria

Location	Funder	Referral Criteria
Lanarkshire	Local Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strathclyde Police- direct referral from custody - Court referral through the Sacro Arrest Referral Service - Diversion from prosecution, on a statutory order or at an exit point of order but still in need of support (from CJ Social Work) - Social Work Child and Families Teams - Self-referrals, ex-Service users who need support, or people who have heard of service through word of mouth
Kirkcaldy	Local Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recently left prison - On a statutory order - On a structured deferred sentence
Glasgow	Local authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recently left prison - On a statutory order - On a structured deferred sentence
Lanarkshire	Scottish Government Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Serving a prison sentence of less than 4-years not subject to statutory supervision - On remand or at a high risk of breaching a Community Payback Order (CPO).
Kirkcaldy		
Glasgow		
Forth Valley		
Edinburgh		

Appendix 2 Information sheet for women (service users)

The role of mentors in supporting re-integration and desistance for women

What is the study about? As part of a PhD research study at Stirling University I would like to hear your opinions and thoughts on the mentoring service you receive. If you would like to take part, you will be asked to participate in an interview with myself in a location where you feel comfortable. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and all information given will be confidential.

Why are your views important? In order to decide whether mentoring is a useful service, your views are extremely important. As you are someone who works with a mentor, you can tell me what you like/dislike about mentoring, how mentoring works and what effect it has had on your life.

What will you be asked to do? Participate in an interview that will last 60-90 mins. This will take place in a location that is private, safe and where you feel comfortable. All of your answers will be kept confidential and if you prefer not to answer particular questions, then you can just tell me this. I will be conducting all of the interviews, therefore no one else will have access to your answers. During the interview I would like to ask you about your views of mentoring, and your relationship with your mentor. I would also like to ask you a little bit about your life including information on family, friends and a little bit about your life history.

What will the information be used for? The information collected will be used to produce a PhD thesis at the University of Stirling and this thesis will be used by Sacro to understand how mentoring works best for service users. The findings may also be published in academic journals or research reports. Your name or any other identifying details will not be used in any of these reports.

Will the information I provide be kept confidential? Yes, all information will be kept in a locked file at the university and information on the computer will be password protected. Your name will not appear on any of the computer files. Some of the things you say may be quoted in research reports but your name will not appear and the quote will not be able to be linked back to you. None of the information you pass on to me will be passed on to Sacro or anyone else unless you tell me that yourself or someone else is at imminent risk of harm. However, I will never pass this information on without telling you first.

Can I change my mind? You can change your mind at any point in time, as your participation is entirely voluntary. Even if you sign the consent form, you can still withdraw from the study at any time.

If you would like to participate in the study

Please attend the Sacro office at the time stated on the covering letter. Or if you prefer, pass your contact details to your mentor and I will contact you to arrange a chat about the research in more detail.

If you would like to speak to someone else about the study you can contact:

Gill McIvor (Researcher's Supervisor): gill.mcivor@stir.ac.uk

Tom Halpin (Chief Executive, Sacro): thalpin@sacro.org.uk

Thank you, Heather Tolland, PhD Student, University of Stirling

Appendix 3 Consent form for women (service users)

Consent Form for Participants (Service Users)

PhD Research Project: The role of mentors in supporting re-integration and desistance for women

If you wish to take part in this study, then you should only do so if you have read the information sheet and understand what the study involves. You should also have received answers to any questions you may have. Even if you sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw from the study at any time as participation is entirely voluntary.

With your permission, I would like to tape record the interviews. The information gained from the recording will be used to make a written version and this will be kept in a locked filing cabinet or on a password protected computer. Names will be removed from the information and any quotes used in research reports will be anonymous and not linked back to you.

With your permission I would also like to contact you at a later date to ask you further questions on your mentoring relationship and how it has developed/progressed. Any contact details you provide to me will be kept in a locked filing cabinet.

With your permission I would like to look at your Sacro files.

I have read and understood the information sheet ☐

I agree to take part in an interview and for it to be recorded ☐

I agree to take part in a second interview, and allow you to contact me using the contact details I provide ☐

I agree to you having access to my Sacro file information ☐

I agree that anonymised quotes may be used in research reports ☐

Name.....

Date.....

Appendix 4 Information sheet for Sacro staff

Information Sheet for Participants (Mentors – Volunteers and Paid)

The role of mentors in supporting re-integration and desistance for women

What is the study about? As part of a PhD research study at Stirling University I would like to hear your opinions and thoughts on the mentoring service you deliver. If you would like to take part, you will be asked to participate in an interview with myself in a location where you feel comfortable. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and all information given will be confidential.

Why are your views important? In order to evaluate mentoring, your views are extremely important. As you mentor a service user, you can tell me what you view to be the benefits of mentoring, what the barriers are to the uptake of mentoring and what you think makes a good mentor.

What will you be asked to do? Participate in an interview that will last 60-90 mins. All of your answers will be kept confidential and if you prefer not to answer particular questions, then you can just tell me this. I will be conducting all of the interviews, therefore no one else will have access to your answers. During the interview I would like to ask you about your views of mentoring, and your relationship with your service user, the training you receive and the benefits of mentoring for you.

What will the information be used for? The information collected will be used to produce a PhD thesis at the University of Stirling and this thesis will be used by Sacro to understand how mentoring works best for service users. The findings may also be published in academic journals or research reports. Your name or any other identifying details will not be used in any of these reports.

Will the information I provide be kept confidential? Yes all information will be kept in a locked file at the university and information on the computer will be password protected. Your name will not appear on any of the computer files. Some of the things you say may be quoted in research reports but your name will not appear and the quote will not be able to be linked back to you. None of the information you pass on to me will be passed on to Sacro or anyone else unless you tell me that yourself or someone else is at imminent risk of harm. However, I will never pass this information on without telling you first.

Can I change my mind? You can change your mind at any point in time, as your participation is entirely voluntary. Even if you sign the consent form, you can still withdraw from the study at any time.

Would you like to participate? If you would like to participate in the study, please pass your contact details to your manager and I will contact you to arrange a chat about the research in more detail.

If you would like to speak to someone else about the study you can contact:
Gill McIvor (Researcher's Supervisor): gill.mcivor@stir.ac.uk
Tom Halpin (Chief Executive, Sacro): thalpin@sacro.org.uk

Thank you, Heather Tolland, PhD Student, University of Stirling

Appendix 5 Interview schedule for women

Interview Schedule/Topic Guide for Service Users/Former Service Users

1. Background Questions

Prompts:

- How did you become involved with Sacro's mentoring service?
- Why did you want a mentor? What did you she could do to help you?
- What were your first impressions of the Sacro mentoring service? Has this view changed?
- So how long have you been seeing your mentor for now?
- What would you say your main difficulties/needs were before you started using the service? (Examples: help with budgeting, drug/alcohol support)
- (If they say more than one) What is your most important issue/need out of those that you have mentioned? (This gives an indication of whether their issues/needs are related to individualising factors or circumstances/society factors)
- What would you say was more important for you? The emotional support or the practical support?

2. Information/definition of mentoring

Prompts:

- Did you know what mentoring was before you started?
- How would you define mentoring? If you were asked 'what is a mentor?' what would you say?

3. Mentoring sessions

Prompts:

- How often do you meet with your mentor?
- How long do the meetings last?
- What do you do together with your mentor?
- Do you set goals with your mentor? Is it a joint process?
- What would you say are the strengths (if any) of the mentoring service at Sacro?
- What would you say are the weaknesses/limitations of the service? (E.g. longer with your mentor, more sessions)
- Can you think of any reasons why some women may not take up mentoring?
- What do you think could be done to improve the mentoring service?

4. About the mentor

Prompts:

- Are there any characteristics/personality traits that you think are important in a mentor?
- Do you think you and your mentor are well matched?
- How would you describe your relationship? For example, a friendship, maybe role modelling or just a professional working relationship?
- Does it matter to you whether your mentor has a similar background to yourself or similar lifestyle?
- What do you like about your mentor? (x)
- Is there anything you would change about your mentor? (x)
- Does your mentor praise you? Can you give any examples? (x)
- Does your mentor ever challenge your behaviour or opinions? (x)

5. Outcomes of mentoring

- How do you think mentoring has affected the following areas in your life?

Need
Housing
Food, clothing, possessions
Physical Health
Mental health
Drug Use
Alcohol Use
Personal Safety/Risk
Financial
Training/Employment
Engagement with support agencies (optional – as asked above)
Relationships
Reducing Re-offending

- is there anything apart from Sacro that supported you to make these changes?
- What chance do you think there is of reoffending in the future?

- Has mentoring encouraged/helped you to go along to any other groups/services?
- Did you go to these? Did you find them helpful?; If you didn't go to these services, why not?
- Would you have accessed these services without Sacro's help? If not, then why?
- Do you have any issues or needs that you feel are not being supported just now?
- Have you ever experienced any problems at Sacro?

6. Experiences in the community & relationships/social capital

- Do you receive support from any other organisations apart from Sacro? What is your relationship like with these workers?
- Have you received much support from services over the years?
- Do you think there is anything else that could be done in the community/local area to help you?
- How are your relationships with other people in the community/local area?
- How much contact do you have with people outside your local community?
- Do you attend any groups or classes for fun?
- Can you describe any important relationships in your life currently?
(Family/friends/partner)
- What type of support do these provide if any? How often do you see them?
- Do you feel that you have any relationships that have changed as a result of mentoring?
(already asked above)

7. Volunteers

Sometimes mentors are volunteers so I have a few questions relating to volunteering.

- Would it matter to you whether your mentor was paid or a volunteer? Would you expect them both to do just as good a job?
- Do you have any experience of volunteering yourself?
- Do you think there are any benefits of volunteering? (optional)
- Is volunteering something you might be interested in doing yourself in the future? What benefits do you think it would bring

Concluding questions

- How does Sacro compare to other agencies/workers you have worked with?
- Would you recommend the mentoring service to other women in contact with the criminal justice system?
- What would you like to see happen for yourself in the future?
- Is there anything you would like to add?
- Do you have any questions for me about the research?

Appendix 6 List of pseudonyms

Pseudonyms for women who accessed mentoring	Pseudonyms for mentors and managers	Pseudonyms for social work staff
Rachel	M1 (paid mentor)	SW1
Debbie	M2 (paid mentor)	SW2
Katie	M3 (paid mentor)	SW3
Linda	M4 (paid mentor)	SW4
Diana	M5 (paid mentor)	SW5
Jacqui	M6 (paid mentor)	SW6
Fiona	M7 (paid mentor)	SW7
Barbara	M8 (paid mentor)	SW8
Susan	M9 (paid mentor)	SW9
Alison	M10 (paid mentor)	
Kirsty	M11 (paid mentor)	
Claire	VM1 (volunteer mentor)	
Karen	VM2 (volunteer mentor)	
Julie	VM3 (volunteer mentor)	
Christine	Mngr1 (Sacro manager)	
Louise	Mngr2 (Sacro manager)	
Marie	Mngr3 (Sacro manager)	
Alana	Mngr4 (Sacro manager)	
Stephanie	Mngr5 (Sacro manager)	
Gemma	Mngr6 (Sacro manager)	

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